Mushoku Tensei

jobless reincarnation

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16

Chapter 73

Forest's Rain, Part One

OKAY, FITZ. OUR DESTINATION, THE FOREST OF HAIL, IS JUST AHEAD.

LET'S GET TO IT.

Y...

YUP...!

SORRY, RUDY.

I DIDN'T MEAN TO DECEIVE YOU...

Mushoku Tensei 16

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A FEW DAYS AGO...

NEXT...

AS TO HOW WE MAKE RUDEUS REALIZE THAT FITZ'S TRUE IDENTITY IS, IN FACT, SYLPHIETTE...

SAY TO HIM...

"I AM SYLPHIETTE, AND WE GREW UP TOGETHER IN BUENA VILLAGE."

SIMPLE AS THAT, REALLY. HONESTY IS THE BEST POLICY, NO?

NGH... ALL THE RUMORS SAY THE GREYRATS ARE WILD ABOUT BIG BOOBS...

MAYBE I WOULD'VE HAD A BETTER CHANCE IF I WERE A LITTLE MORE TOP-HEAVY...

I DOUBT IT'D BE THAT EASY.

YOUR IDENTITY SEEMS TO BE JUST ABOUT THE ONLY THING HE CAN'T REMEMBER.

HE'S COMPLETELY FORGOTTEN YOU.

JOLT

MEMO-
RIES,
YOU
SAY...?

SYL-
PHIE.

DO THE
TWO OF YOU
SHARE ANY
SPECIAL
MEMORIES?

YOUR
VOICELESS
MAGIC OUGHT
TO BE A
GIVEAWAY,
AND YET IT IS
NOT ENOUGH
FOR HIM TO
MAKE THE
CONNECTION.

YES.

PEOPLE
TEND TO
REMEMBER
OTHERS
BASED ON
EITHER
THEIR ABILI-
TIES OR
SHARED
EXPERI-
ENCES.

MEMO-
RIES...

THEREFORE,
WHY NOT PLACE
YOUR FAITH IN
YOUR SHARED
MEMORIES?

UMM... I TOLD YOU ABOUT HOW I WAS BULLIED BEFORE, DIDN'T I?

YES. ALL BECAUSE OF THE COLOR OF YOUR HAIR.

I DO WONDER WHY, THOUGH.

IT'S SUCH A BEAUTIFUL SHADE OF WHITE.

I HAVEN'T BEEN ABLE TO TELL THEM...THAT MY HAIR USED TO BE GREEN.

NOT THAT I DON'T TRUST THEM, BUT...

I'M AFRAID THEY WON'T LIKE ME ANYMORE...

UMM... I MET RUDY WHEN HE SAVED ME FROM THE VILLAGE CHILDREN THAT WERE BULLYING ME.

TO ME, THAT'S OUR MOST SPECIAL MEMORY.

TEE HEE... IT REALLY TAKES ME BACK, JUST TALKING ABOUT IT.

PERHAPS A SCENARIO IN WHICH FITZ IS ASSAULTED BY HOODLUMS, FORCING RUDEUS TO COME TO HER RESCUE?

WHAT IF WE CONSTRUCTED A SITUATION SIMILAR TO THAT WHICH TRANSPIRED IN THE PAST...?

AH, I SEE...

EVEN SHOULD I INSTRUCT HER TO LOSE ON PURPOSE, IT WOULD DO GREAT DAMAGE TO HER IMAGE AS A "DEPENDABLE UPPER-CLASSMAN."

IT WOULD BE A RARE HOODLUM INDEED THAT COULD BEST OUR FITZ.

NO. ABOVE ALL ELSE, FITZ IS MY BODYGUARD.

HAVE YOU ANY OTHER MEMORIES?

THAT PLAN WON'T WORK AT ALL.

THERE'S ONE MORE.

OH...!

UH... HMM.

AND THINGS WORKED OUT SUCH THAT WE HAD TO TAKE A BATH AT RUDY'S HOUSE.

BUT IT STARTED RAINING WHILE WE WERE PRACTICING MAGIC...

AT FIRST, RUDY THOUGHT I WAS A BOY...

SHFF

GLANCE

AND THEN... HOW TO PUT THIS...

HE WOUND UP MAKING ME STRIP...

OR RATHER...

UMM.

BASI-CALLY...

THAT'S WHEN HE FINALLY FIGURED OUT I WAS A GIRL...!

HE...

HE SAW, OKAY?!

THAT IS...

.....

DAZE...

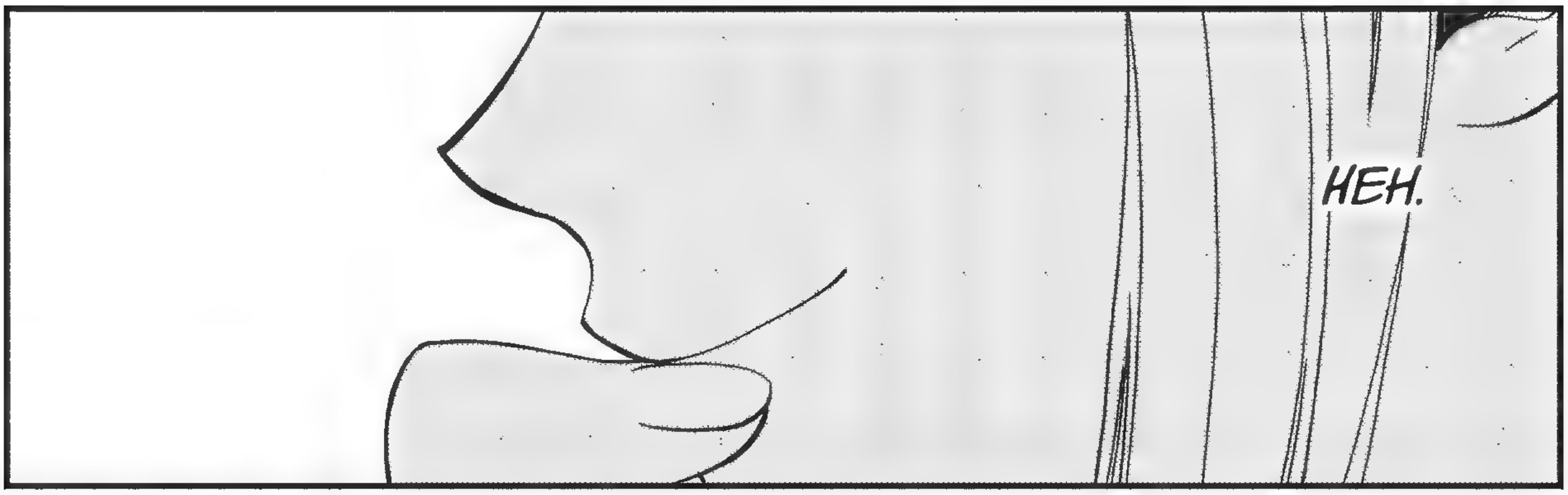
DID I JUST TICKLE THE PRINCESS'S FETISH OR SOMETHING?!

Hey...

A wholly *wondrous* tale, truly.

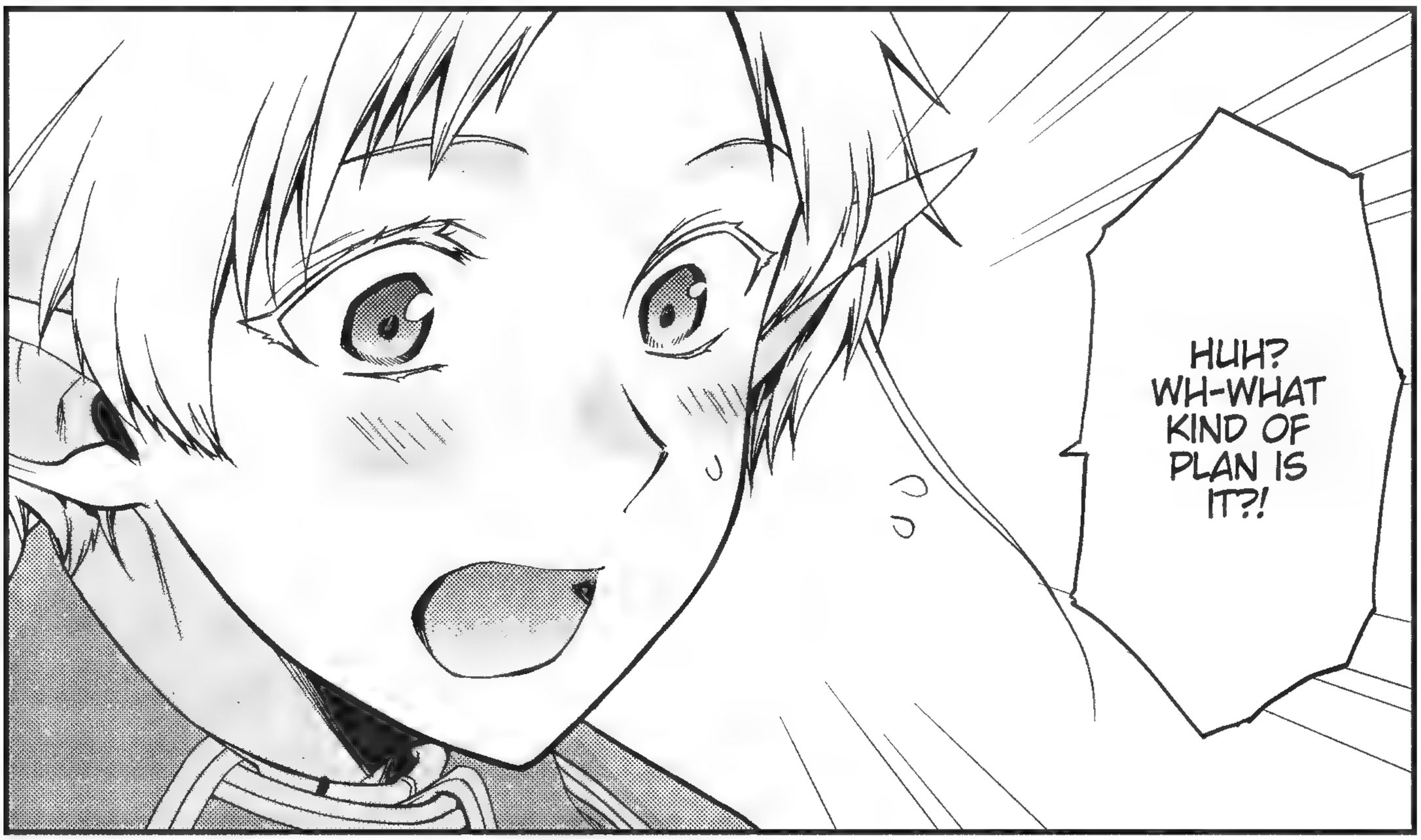
HE MUST UNCONSCIOUSLY BELIEVE THAT NO GOOD WILL COME FROM SEEKING THE TRUTH OF ONE'S IDENTITY.

THIS IS MOST ILLUMINATING. HE HAS NOT YET REALIZED THAT FITZ IS A WOMAN. AND HE DOES NOT THINK TO SEEK THE TRUTH OF HER IDENTITY, BECAUSE OF THAT INCIDENT FROM THEIR PAST. YES, THAT'S IT.


HEH.


YOU HAVE A PLAN, THEN?
QUITE. IN FACT, I BELIEVE IT MAY BE THE *ONLY* PLAN THAT WILL WORK.


LUKE, REMOVE YOUR HANDS.


HUH? WH-WHAT KIND OF PLAN IS IT?!

Undress.

IT IS DECIDED. WE MUST RECREATE THAT SITUATION FROM YOUR PAST.

WE MUST HAVE HIM UNDRESS SYLPHIE WITH HIS OWN TWO HANDS.

AND THEN, IN THE HEAT OF THE MOMENT, YOU'LL HAVE THE PERFECT OPPORTUNITY TO TELL HIM THE TRUTH.

HUH?

WHAAAT?

CHATTER

CHATTER

CHATTER

UMM, AND RUDY IS...

GLANCE

!

RUDEUS.

LOOK, IT'S SIR FITZ!

OH, HEY, FITZ...

JUST A SMALL THING, REALLY. BUT I'D LIKE TO SPEAK WITH YOU.

IS... SOMETHING THE MATTER?

EEK! FITZ, IN THE FLESH!

OKAY, GOT IT. LET'S GO SOMEWHERE LESS NOISY.

SOUNDS GOOD...

UH... UMMM... I HAVE A FAVOR I'D LIKE TO ASK OF YOU.

I DOUBT MANY PEOPLE WOULD WANDER OVER HERE.

SO, WHAT DO YOU NEED?

A FAVOR?

Y-YUP. IS THAT BAD...?

?

MUTTER

MUTTER

I TOTALLY ASSUMED THIS WAS ABOUT WHAT HAPPENED AT THE LIBRARY.

NAH, NO WAY!

A FAVOR, IS IT? I UNDER-STAND.

CONFIDENCE

DON'T WORRY, JUST LEAVE IT TO ME!

HUH?!

I HAVEN'T EVEN SAID WHAT IT IS YET!!

THROB

HONESTLY, IF IT'S YOU WHO'S ASKING, IT'D HAVE TO BE A PRETTY CRAZY REQUEST FOR ME TO TURN IT DOWN.

AND AS IT TURNS OUT, THAT NOBLE'S BODYGUARD IS INCREDIBLY WEAK.

OH... WELL, JUST HEAR ME OUT FOR A SECOND.

THE TRUTH IS, HER ROYAL HIGHNESS ARIEL RECENTLY CALLED UPON THE RESIDENCE OF ONE OF HER FELLOW NOBLES...

LEAD WITH THAT NEXT TIME...

OH, THAT'S A RELIEF. THAT SORT OF VIOLENCE REALLY ISN'T MY FORTE.

WHERE'D YOU GET *THAT* IDEA?!

YOU WANT ME TO BEAT HIM UP, THEN?

FLEX

AND BROUGHT BACK A FLOWER THAT ONLY GROWS THERE.

THAT A PARTY OF FOUR OF HIS HIRED BODYGUARDS WENT DEEP INTO THE FOREST OF HAIL...

THAT'S WHEN THE NOBLE SAID...

GETTING BACK ON TRACK...

M'LADY WAS UPSET THAT THE NOBLE BRAGGED ABOUT THIS BODYGUARD...

I SEE.

"MY FITZ IS FAR MORE CAPABLE."

SO SHE SHOT RIGHT BACK AT HIM...

IT'S FAMOUS FOR ONLY BLOOMING IN THE DEAD OF WINTER.

A FLOWER THAT GROWS DEEP IN THE FOREST OF HAIL? THAT WOULD BE A FREEZE-FRINGE, RIGHT?

BUT IT'S NOT REALLY SOMETHING TO BRAG ABOUT IF YOU SEND FOUR A-RANK ADVENTURERS TO GO AND PICK IT.

IT'S TRUE THAT THE FOREST OF HAIL IS DANGEROUS IN WINTER...

OOH! OF COURSE RUDY WOULD KNOW ABOUT IT!

AND BOASTED ABOUT HOW SHE COULD GET IT WITH EVEN FEWER PEOPLE.

C C C

Y-YUP! BUT HER HIGHNESS JUST COULDN'T HOLD HERSELF BACK...

WHAT?!

THEN ALL YOU HAVE TO DO IS SAY YOU PICKED IT YOURSELF, AND--

I SEE, SO THAT'S WHAT YOU'RE AFTER!

THEN I CAN GET AN ADVENTURER BUDDY OF MINE TO SELL YOU ONE AT A HUGE DISCOUNT!

L-LOOK, THAT'S NOT GOING TO CUT IT... IF SOMEBODY FOUND OUT, THE PRINCESS WOULD LOSE FACE...

N-NO WAY! THAT'S NO GOOD! THE WHOLE POINT IS TO SHOW OFF HOW STRONG I AM, RIGHT?!

AH, BUT ON SOME LEVEL, EVERYONE IS BOUND TOGETHER. CONNECTIONS ARE ALSO A FORM OF STRENGTH, ARE THEY NOT?

HMM.

I SEE. THEN SHALL THE TWO OF US GO PICK ONE?

WHAT THE HECK, RUDEUS?!

PERFECT TIMING, REALLY. THE PEOPLE FROM STEPPED LEADER ARE IN TOWN. I'LL GIVE THEM A HOLLER.

TEN PEOPLE SHOULD BE PLENTY, RIGHT?

NGH...

WE...

RUDEUS, WERE YOU LISTENING? HER HIGHNESS TOLD ME TO GO WITH *FEWER* PEOPLE!

IT'LL BE FINE.

THEY'LL JUST HAPPEN TO BE IN THE FOREST AS THE SAME TIME OF US, THAT'S ALL.

AS LONG AS NOBODY FINDS OUT, IT'S ALL GOOD!

JUST YOU AND ME SHOULD BE MORE THAN ENOUGH, RIGHT, RUDEUS?!

WE DON'T NEED THEIR HELP!

!

FITZ, ARE YOU TRYING TO ASK ME TO BE YOUR BODYGUARD?

OH, I SEE...

YOU'RE THE ONLY ONE I CAN COUNT ON, RUDEUS!!

Y-YES, THAT'S EXACTLY IT! I'M NERVOUS ABOUT GOING IN THERE ALL ALONE.

so it'll be my pleasure to do you this favor!

I understand. I owe you a lot, Fitz...

I COULDN'T BELIEVE HOW ALL THOSE DIFFERENT IDEAS KEPT POPPING OUT OF HIM.

STILL, WHEN I ASKED HIM FOR HIS HELP...

EVEN NOW, WHILE WE'RE WALKING ALONG, HE'S CASUALLY MELTING SHOULDER-HIGH SNOW.

RUDY IS DEFINITELY AMAZING.

OH! NOTHING.

HMM? DID YOU SAY SOMETHING, FITZ?

REMEMBER THE PLAN! IT HAS TO WORK!

OH, DRAT, I'M GETTING TOO EXCITED.

YES, I WAS TUTORING A YOUNG LADY, AND SHE GAVE IT TO ME ON MY TENTH BIRTHDAY.

SORRY TO MAKE YOU CARRY IT FOR ME.

I KNOW THIS ISN'T THE FIRST TIME YOU'VE LET ME HOLD THIS STAFF, BUT WOW, IT'S INCREDIBLE!

IT'S CUSTOM-MADE AND EVEN HAS COLORED MAGIC STONES. I'VE ONLY SEEN OTHERS THIS GOOD AT THE PALACE!

OH, I DON'T HAVE AS MUCH TO CARRY, SO IT'S ALL GOOD!

PLUS, I'VE ALWAYS WANTED TO USE ONE OF THESE!

SO HOW IS THE THICKNESS TREATING YOU?

SMIRK

.....

SHE WAS PROBABLY THINKING AHEAD TO HOW IT MIGHT SUIT ME AFTER I'D GROWN.

YOU MEAN THE HANDLE?

IT *IS* THICK, ISN'T IT... MAYBE IT WAS DESIGNED TO BE USED WITH TWO HANDS.

SQUEEZE

SQUEEZE

SQUEEZE

WHISPER...

"TOWER OF RED."

NEXT UP...

OKAY, OKAY! SO I TOOK THIS STAFF THAT MAGNIFIES RUDY'S POWERS...

GLOW

NOD

BLINK BLINK BLINK

RUMBLE

RUMBLE...

IT'S ALMOST A RULE THAT YOU TAKE SHELTER IN A CAVE DURING WINTER RAINS, RIGHT?!

RUSTLE RUSTLE RUSTLE

NO NEED.

ACCORDING TO THE MAP, RIGHT UP AHEAD THERE'S...

HM?

RAIN CLOUDS... HOW UNUSUAL.

LOOKS LIKE THINGS ARE GOING WELL. I'M GLAD.

OH.

I-IT DOES, DOESN'T IT?!

LOOKS LIKE IT'S GOING TO RAIN, FITZ.

WHAT?!

I'LL DISPERSE THESE CLOUDS IN NO TIME FLAT.

SHAAAA...

O-OH YEAH. RUDY'S A SAINT-LEVEL WATER MAGE... CONTROLLING THE WEATHER'S NOTHING TO HIM.

SQUEEZE

IT HAS TO RAIN NOW... I MEAN, EVEN PRINCESS ARIEL IS HELPING ME!

FAILURE IS NOT AN OPTION!

GLOW

ゴゴゴ
RUMBLE...

ゴゴゴゴ
RUMBLE
RUMBLE...

DRIP
DRIP

HMM...?

SHOCK

IT'S PROBABLY JUST BECAUSE I DIDN'T GIVE YOU THE STAFF BACK...!

OH, IT'S FINE, IT'S FINE!

I'M REALLY SORRY, FITZ...

LOOKS LIKE I'M HAVING AN OFF DAY.

!

SHAAAAA-

AM I GETTING RUSTY...? OR MAYBE...

MUMBLE MUMBLE MUMBLE...

I SHOULD BE ABLE TO DISPERSE *THAT* MUCH EVEN WITHOUT A STAFF.

IT KIND OF LOOKS LIKE HE'S FIGURED OUT THAT IT'S RAINING BECAUSE SOMEONE WANTS IT TO...

O...

OKAY!

LET'S TAKE SHELTER THERE.

IF I'M NOT MISTAKEN, THERE WAS A CAVE AHEAD.

WELL, NOTHING WE CAN DO NOW THAT IT'S STARTED RAINING.

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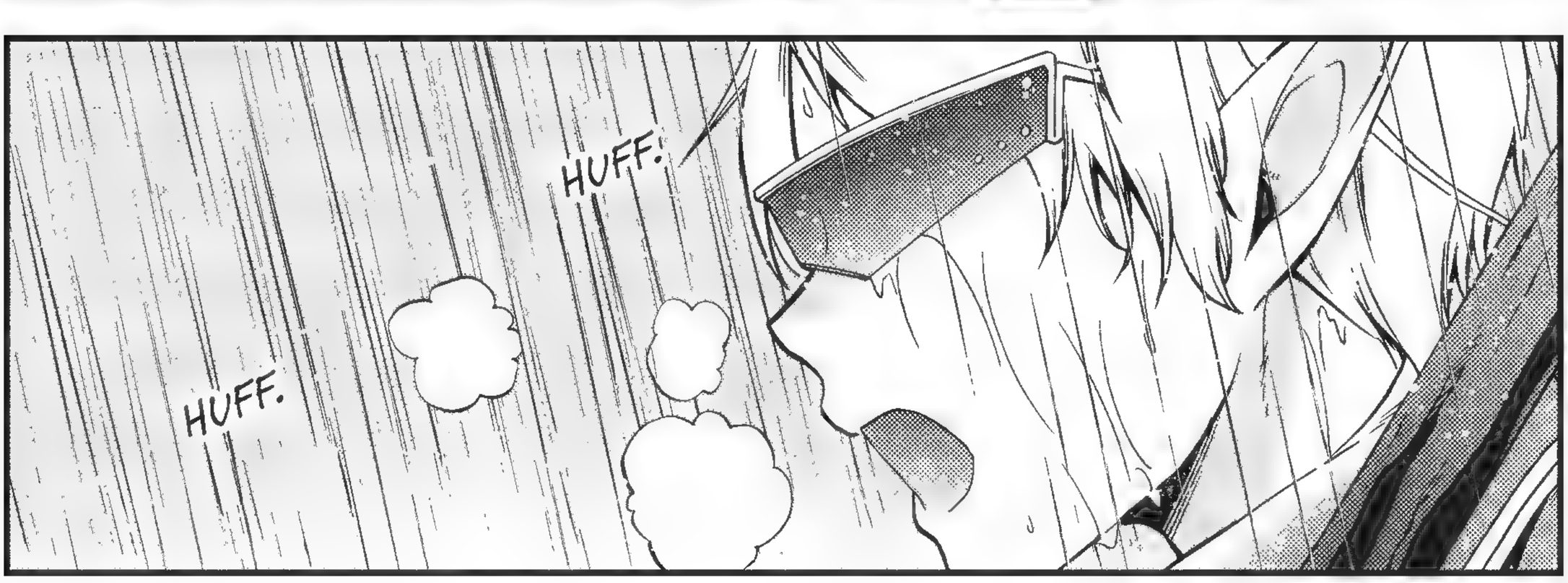
SHAAAAAA

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THIS ISN'T RIGHT.





SOMETHING'S OFF ABOUT ALL THIS.

IT'S REALLY RARE FOR IT TO RAIN IN THE NORTHERN LANDS DURING WINTER, BUT IT'S POURING.

MORE THAN THAT...IT FEELS LIKE THE CLOUDS ARE MOVING TOO FAST.

COULD THERE BE MAGIC BEHIND THIS?

SOME-THING'S UP FOR SURE.

INTERFERENCE FROM THAT NOBLE PRIN-CESS ARIEL'S TRYING TO COMPETE WITH, MAYBE?

HAS MY UPPER-CLASSMAN REALIZED WHAT'S GOING ON?

SEEMS NOT.

COME TO THINK OF IT, FITZ WAS ACTING STRANGELY WHEN SHE HIRED ME.

SO WHAT'S GOING ON HERE?

FITZ, LOOK! THERE IT IS!

CHAPTER 74

FOREST'S RAIN PART TWO

THIS HAS TO BE THE CAVE.

FOR NOW, LET'S TAKE SHELTER FROM THE RAIN HERE.

Y...

YUP.

HAVE TO DRY OUR WET CLOTHES.

SQUISH

ANYWAY, I'LL QUIT THINKING ABOUT IT FOR NOW.

TIK

TAK

I'LL GO AHEAD AND START A FIRE, OKAY?

OKAY, THE FIRE'S STEADY NOW.

BOOF

!!

YOYANK

SHIT

WHOA, WHOA, WHOA...!

SHWIFF

YEESH, I'M TOTALLY SOAKED THROUGH.

I'LL JUST WRING THEM OUT AS BEST I CAN AND LET THEM AIR-DRY.

OMIGOSH...!

HUSTLE

HUSTLE

I GUESS IT'S NOT GOOD TO WALK AROUND IN JUST MY UNDERWEAR IN FRONT OF AN UPPERCLASSMAN, HUH...?

ヒュゥゥゥ…

WHOOOOSH…

SHIVER

KRK KRK…

GUESS I'LL CLOSE UP THE ENTRANCE A LITTLE.

UGH, IT'S FREEZING COLD…

I GUESS I CAN LEAVE THIS MUCH OPEN…

WOULDN'T IT BE BETTER TO TAKE OFF YOUR CLO--

OH!

SHAKE

NNGH..

SHAKE

UMM...

I GET IT. SHE CAN'T TAKE THEM OFF BECAUSE I'M HERE...

SNEEZE

JOLT

HEY, FITZ.

WH...

WHAT IS IT?!

WHAT?!

WHO TOLD ME IT WAS TABOO FOR ELVES TO SHOW THEIR FLESH TO OTHER RACES.

A LONG TIME AGO, I KNEW THIS LITTLE GIRL...

UH!

UMM ...!

TURN

I'LL TURN THE OTHER WAY AND CLOSE MY EYES...

SO PLEASE USE THAT TIME TO MAGICALLY DRY YOUR CLOTHES.

I'LL ALLOW MYSELF TO ENJOY THE SOUND OF HER STRIPPING, AT LEAST.

HEH HEH... I'M TRULY A PERFECT GENTLEMAN.

OF COURSE, THAT TABOO BIT WAS A FLAT-OUT LIE...BUT A PERFECT ONE FOR FITZ'S NEEDS, RIGHT?

HEH...

SILENCE

WAIT

CAN'T

SILENCE

WAIT

CAN'T

SILENCE

DROOP

...?

SUPPPP...

SHIVER
SHIVER
SHIVER
SHIVER
?!
CHATTER
CHATTER
CHATTER

FITZ, WHAT'RE YOU DOING?!

.....

SHIVER SHIVER SHIVER

YOU COULD WIND UP WITH SOMETHING WAY WORSE THAN A SIMPLE COLD, YOU KNOW!

COME ON...!

I'M BEGGING YOU, AT LEAST CHANGE YOUR CLOTHES!!

WHAT'S WRONG? WHAT IS SHE THINKING?

DO YOU WANT ME TO MAKE YOU A PRIVATE ROOM--

NO, I'LL JUST LEAVE THE CAVE FOR A BIT.

LET'S DO THAT. THAT'D BE FOR THE BEST.

SO PLEASE USE THAT TIME TO CHANGE, AND--

W...

WAIT ...!

.....

FITZ?

DOES SHE WANT TO TELL ME SOME-THING?

I KNOW.

YOU REALLY WILL CATCH A COLD, YOU KNOW.

JUST WHAT IS SHE TRYING TO DO HERE?

I KNOW.

I'LL DIE, RIGHT?

IF I DON'T DO SOME-THING NOW.

THIS IS DANGER-OUS.

IF YOU GET TOO COLD...

YOU'LL DIE. IT HAPPENS TO PEOPLE ALL THE TIME.

SHE REALLY IS THAT HESITANT TO STRIP IN FRONT OF ME.

BUT I GUESS...

THEN WHY DON'T YOU JUST TAKE YOUR CLOTHES OFF?

I...

I CAN'T TAKE THEM OFF MYSELF.

WH- WHAT'S SHE SAYING NOW?!

YOU TAKE THEM OFF FOR ME.

SERIOUSLY, WHAT THE HECK AM I EVEN SAYING RIGHT NOW?!!

YEAH. THAT'S IT. SHE CAN'T MANAGE TO GET THEM OFF BY HERSELF.

IT'S PROBABLY JUST THAT HER FINGERS HAVE GONE NUMB FROM THE COLD.

HOLD YOUR HORSES, RUDEUS...

WELL...

I-IF YOU CAN'T TAKE THEM OFF YOURSELF...

THEN I GUESS THERE'S NO CHOICE. I'LL HAVE TO TAKE THEM OFF FOR YOU.



GULP

TWITCH

What's wrong, Sylph? If you don't take off your clothes, you'll catch a cold.

Y-yes, but...!

...?

SPLAT

PEEK

"I CAN'T TAKE THEM OFF MYSELF.

"YOU TAKE THEM OFF FOR ME."

HEY, FITZ...

WHAT'S WRONG ...?

RUDY.

...?

She can't take her clothes off herself?

H-HERE GOES...

IT'S NOTH-ING.

YUP...

SNAP

SNAP

SNAP

Here...

lift your arms.

SHIFF...

FIDDLE FIDDLE

the bottoms, too.

Come on...

SHWFF

TUP
TUP...

THUP

SHIFF

TUG...

RUDY.

THERE'S ...

STILL...

ONE THING LEFT...

GULP





Just be yourself!

Okay?

Rudy.

Th...

thank you...

AAAAAHH!!!

Don't go anywhere, okaaay?

Don't go, please!

FITZ...

WHAT IS IT...

RUDY?

SQUEEZE

WHY DIDN'T I REALIZE UNTIL JUST NOW?

WHY...?

FITZ, COULD IT BE POSSIBLE...

THAT YOUR REAL NAME...IS SYLPHIETTE?

YUP...

THAT'S RIGHT.

I'M SYLPHI-ETTE.

SYLPHIETTE FROM BUENA VILLAGE.

SNIFFLE

SNIFFLE

I FINALLY SAID IT...

THE WHOLE TIME YOU WERE GONE, I WAS TRYING MY BEST AT BUENA VILLAGE...!

I... WAITED THIS WHOLE TIME, YOU KNOW...

AND HER HAIR... WAS GREEN.

WAS A CRYBABY WHO ALWAYS STUCK TO ME LIKE GLUE...

THAT'S RIGHT. THE SYLPHIE I KNEW...

...

A MAN WORTHY OF RESPECT. HE'S SOMEONE SO AMAZING HE WAS CHOSEN TO BE PRINCESS ARIEL'S BODYGUARD.

BUT SIR FITZ, MY UPPERCLASSMAN, IS SO RELIABLE, DIGNIFIED, KNOWLEDGEABLE, AND INDEPENDENT.

Since you left to be a tutor...

little Sylphiette's been trying her hardest, you know.

SHE REALLY DID TRY HER HARDEST, DIDN'T SHE?

HMM ...

FOR AGES NOW...

I'VE WANTED TO SAY... I LOVE YOU.

I'VE ALWAYS LOVED YOU, RUDY.

I LOVE YOU EVEN MORE NOW.

PLEASE DON'T GO AWAY AGAIN.

I WANT TO BE WITH YOU FOR-EVER.

AND SHE LOVES ME...?!

SHE GREW UP TO BE EVEN LOVELIER THAN I IMAGINED.

IS THIS REALLY HAPPENING? FITZ, THE UPPER-CLASSMAN I RESPECT SO MUCH, WAS SYLPHIE.

I'M... I'M SO HAPPY!

THEN I'LL TELL HER, TOO.

I LO--

FREEZE

THINKING BACK, DID I EVER TELL ERIS I LOVED HER?

BUT I GET THE FEELING I DIDN'T TELL HER THAT I LOVED HER.

I TOLD HER I WANTED THAT, TOO...

SHE TOLD ME SHE WANTED ME TO BE HER FAMILY.

BECAUSE I NEVER SPOKE THOSE WORDS...?

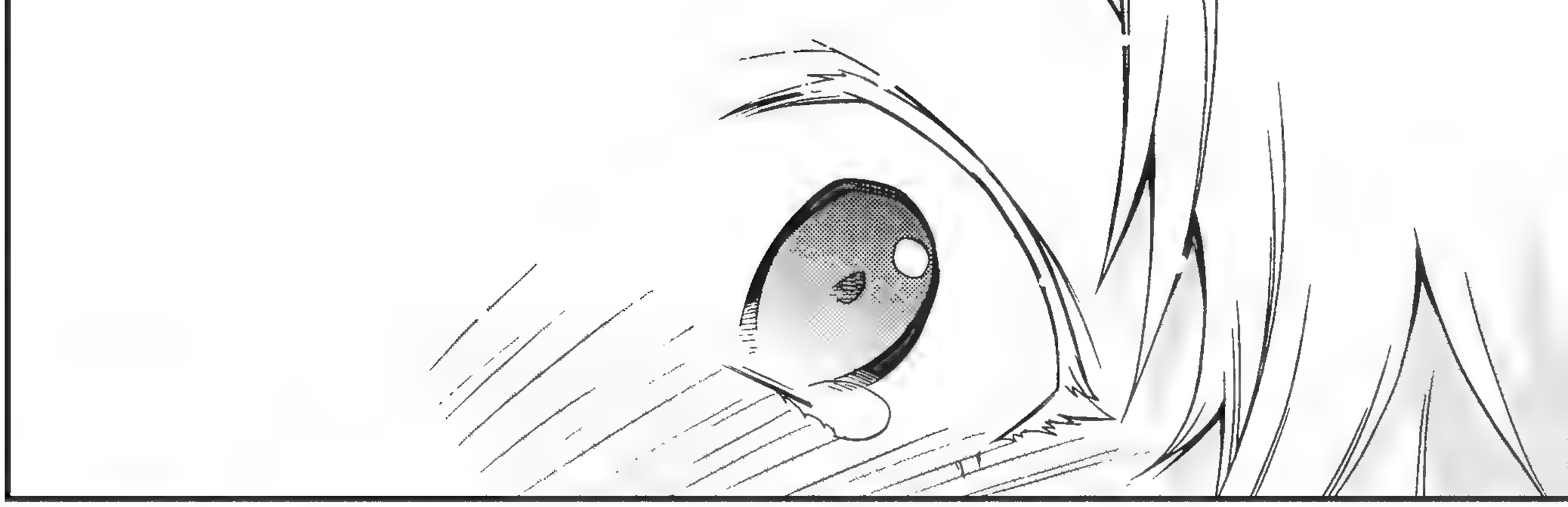
MAYBE ERIS DISAPPEARED...

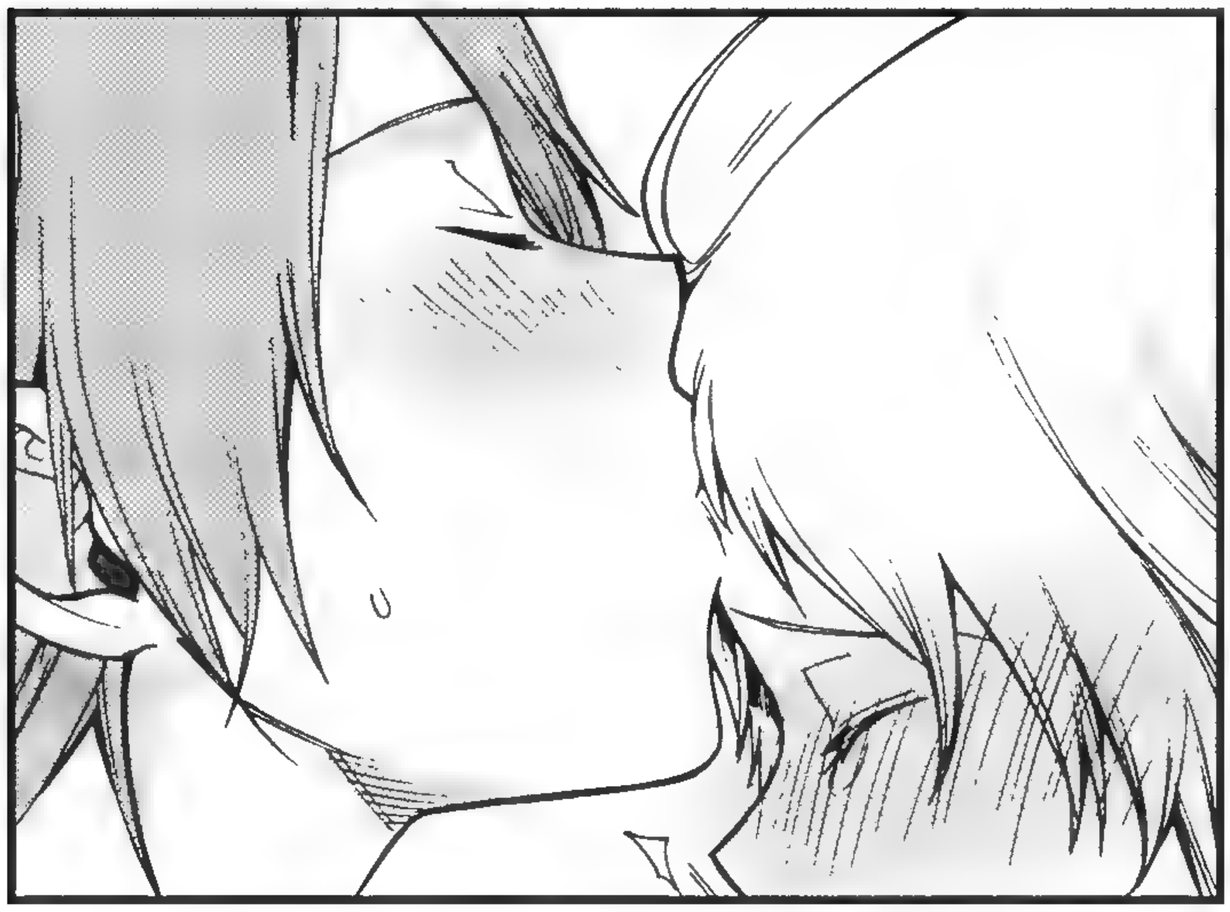
NGH...

GRAB

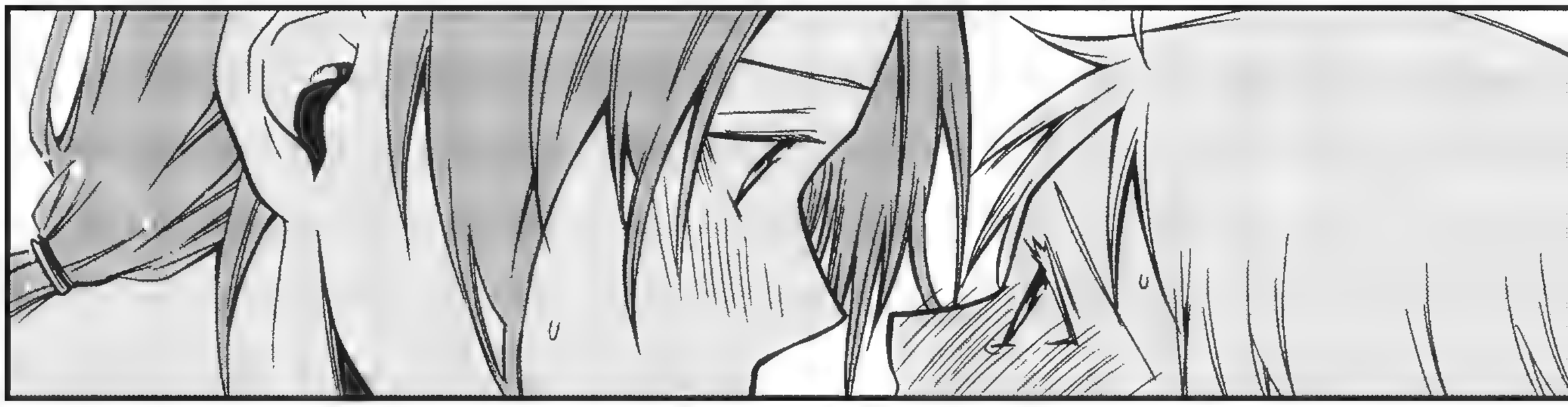
I...

LOVE YOU, TOO.






AAHA
MMF.
AH...
NNH.
NNNH.







Mushoku Tensei

jobless reincarnation

CLASP...

CHAPTER 75

AFTER THE RAIN

SYLPHIE...

THIS IS YOUR FIRST TIME, RIGHT?

YUP...

IT'S MY FIRST TIME.

IS THAT...

BAD?

THANKS TO YOU, MY DICK'S RARING AND READY TO GO!!

NOT BAD AT ALL!

IN FACT, IT'S GOOD!!

WHAT HAPPENED BEFORE MIGHT HAPPEN AGAIN.

BUT IF I SCREW UP AGAIN NOW...

GULP

I CAN'T SCREW UP THIS TIME.

I DON'T EVER WANT TO FEEL LIKE I DID WITH ERIS AGAIN.

I REALLY CAN'T SCREW THIS UP.

I REALLY CAN'T.

HAAH...

HAAH...

SQUEEZE

I'M LEAVING ON A JOURNEY.

RUDEUS, YOU AND I ARE NOT EQUALS.

UH... RUDY?

UM...

HUH...?

IT'S HOPELESS...

SNAP

RUDY?

UMM...

TO HAVE CAUSED YOU SUCH REGRETTABLE EMBARRASS-MENT.

I AM EXTREMELY SORRY...

TRUST ME, THERE'S NOTHING WRONG WITH YOUR FIGURE, SYLPHIE!

NO!

I-IT'S NOT YOUR FAULT, RUDY.

MOST LIKELY IT'S JUST THAT MY BODY IS DISAP-POINT-ING...

TO BE COMPLETELY HONEST, THE WHOLE REASON I CAME TO THE UNIVERSITY WAS TO TRY AND FIND A CURE...

WHAT?

ACTUALLY, THIS HAS BEEN AN ONGOING ISSUE FOR THREE WHOLE YEARS NOW.

TRULY, I WOULD LIKE NOTHING BETTER...

BUT ALAS, FOR ALL MY MAGIC, I AM POW-ERLESS TO--

THAT'S NOT WHAT I MEANT!!

I-IS THAT SO...? BUT RUDY...

IT'S NOT EMBAR-RASSING OR ANY-THING...

SO PLEASE, GO BACK TO HOW YOU WERE BEFORE.

TALKING SO FOR-MALLY!

PLEASE STOP...

WHAT?

OH.

SORRY.

BUT I'D GOTTEN USED TO THINKING OF YOU AS MY SENIOR, SO...

RUDY, WHEN YOU SPEAK LIKE THAT...

IT FEELS LIKE YOU'RE TRYING TO STAY DISTANT FROM ME.

WELL, YEAH, THAT'S FAIR...

BUT...

SNIFFLE

NO ONE EVER TOLD ME THAT!

WHAT?

UH... JUST SAYING "OKAY" SHOULD BE PLENTY RELAXED, RIGHT?

THERE'S THAT TONE AGAIN!!

OKAY.

HEE HEE.

WE'LL WORK ON IT.

FROM NOW ON, TRY TO RELAX AROUND ME!

OKAY?

LITTLE BY LITTLE, SYLPHIE TOLD ME EVERYTHING.

AND WHY SHE HID HER TRUE IDENTITY.

WHY HER HAIR WAS WHITE...

WHY SHE BECAME PRINCESS ARIEL'S BODYGUARD...

AFTER THAT, I ASKED SYLPHIE ABOUT WHAT HAPPENED TO HER AFTER THE DISPLACEMENT...



AND MS. LILIA TAUGHT ME ETIQUETTE...

AH HA HA!

SO, RUDY... WHEN I WENT TO YOUR HOUSE TO TRY AND ASK WHERE YOU'D GONE...

MS. ZENITH WOUND UP TEACHING ME HEALING MAGIC...

MS. LILIA WAS HOLDING ON TO IT FOR ME, BUT I'M NOT SURE WHAT BECAME OF IT...

I WAS TOLD THEY'RE AN ELVEN TRADITION.

OH YEAH, RUDY, FOR YOUR TENTH BIRTHDAY...

I EVEN MADE YOU A PENDANT, YOU KNOW.

RUMMAGE

THEN THAT MEANS ...

THAT'S ...!

HOW DID YOU GET IT?!

I GUESS YOU MADE THIS YOURSELF, SYLPHIE.

BUT SHE DIDN'T SAY ANYTHING ABOUT YOU, SYLPHIE.

MS. LILIA HAD IT...

I GET IT.

SO THAT WAS LILIA'S WAY OF BEING CONSIDERATE, THEN.

SHE PROBABLY THOUGHT THERE WAS A GOOD CHANCE I'D DIED...

AND DECIDED NOT TO SAY ANYTHING.

I THOUGHT IT'D BE A PAIN IF PEOPLE TEASED ME ABOUT IT MATCHING HERS, SO I HAVEN'T BEEN WEARING IT, BUT NOW...HMN.

ELINALISE HAS ONE JUST LIKE THIS. AN ELVEN TRADITION, HUH?

AND THEN YOU CAME ALONG, SEE?

SHE LOST THE BATTLE FOR THE CROWN, SO WE ESCAPED TO THE UNIVERSITY OF MAGIC...

AND SO...

EVER SINCE THAT TIME WHEN MY MANA RAN DRY RIGHT AFTER THE DISPLACEMENT, MY HAIR'S STAYED WHITE.

AFTER I REAPPEARED NEAR HER ROYAL HIGHNESS ARIEL, SHE TOOK ME UNDER HER WING.

BUT...

S...

SORRY...

YOU COULD HAVE TOLD ME WHO YOU WERE A LOT EARLIER, YOU KNOW...!

"NICE TO MEET YOU," YOU KNOW.

BUT IT WAS A HUGE SHOCK WHEN YOU SAID...

I KNOW IT'S NOT REALLY YOUR FAULT OR ANYTHING...

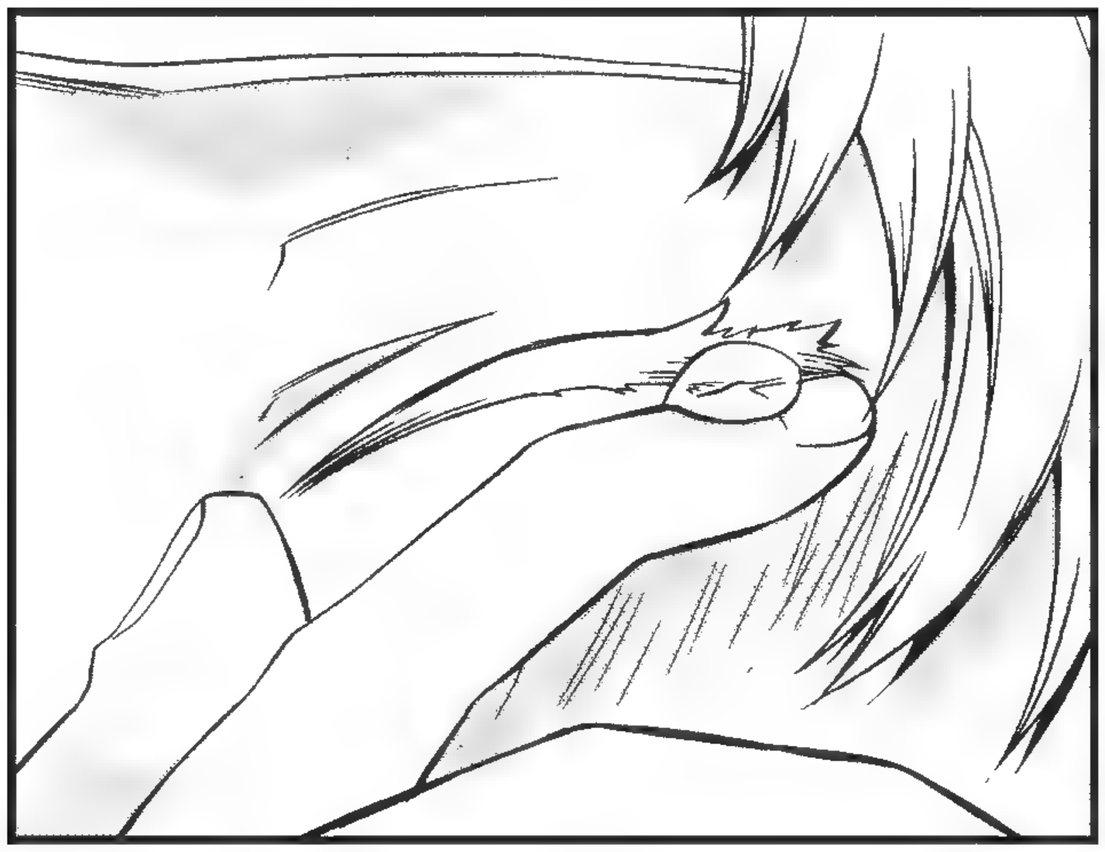
I WAS JUST...SO AFRAID YOU WOULDN'T REMEMBER ME EVEN IF I *DID* TELL YOU...

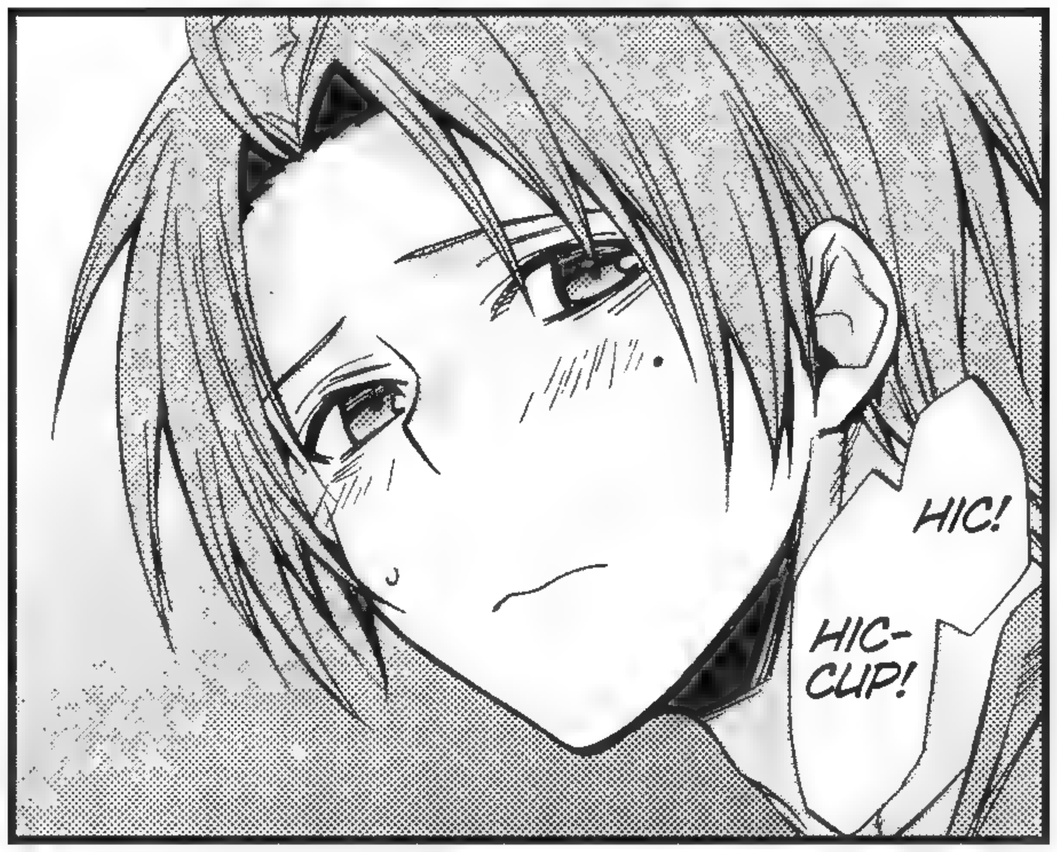
I'M...

SORRY...

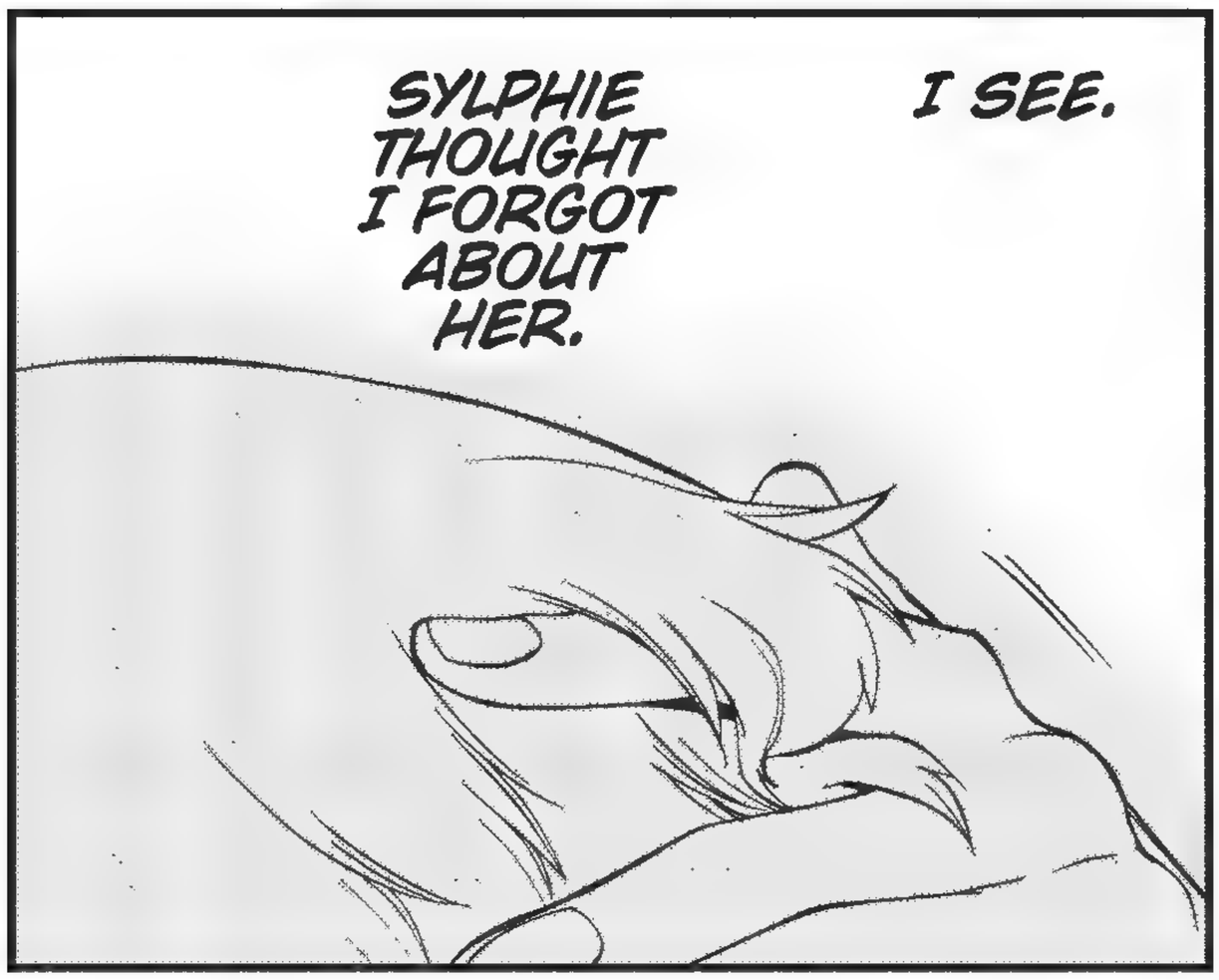
THAT'S ...

TRUE, HUH?




HIC!
HIC-CUP!


FOR NOT RECOG-NIZING YOU FOR A WHOLE YEAR.
PLEASE ACCEPT MY APOLOGIES...


SYLPHIE THOUGHT I FORGOT ABOUT HER.


I SEE.

BECAUSE OF THAT, THERE WAS A GOOD CHANCE OF ME BEING HER ENEMY AS WELL.

ARIEL'S MAIN RIVAL IS HER OWN BROTHER, AND I'M CONNECTED TO THE NOBLES WHO SUPPORT HIM.

LET'S NOT FORGET I'M A BOREAS, EITHER.

NOT SAYING ANYTHING WAS THE RIGHT CHOICE.

I...

I FELT LIKE... SOMEWHERE DEEP INSIDE MY HEART, I WAS OKAY KEEPING THINGS THE WAY THEY WERE...

I FIGURED I HAD TO DO SOMETHING DRASTIC LIKE THIS, OR SOON IT'D BE TOO LATE.

BUT I SAW ALL THOSE GIRLS KEEP FLOCKING TO YOU.

YOU DON'T HAVE TO WORRY ABOUT ME HAVING A FLING WITH ANYBODY.

FAT CHANCE OF THAT WHILE I'VE GOT E.D.

HON-ESTLY.

RUDY, YOU'RE REALLY ...

SO DENSE, AREN'T YOU?

BUMP

I DON'T THINK I CAN ARGUE WITH THAT ONE.

WELL...

LOOKS LIKE I FELL FOR YOUR PLAN, HOOK, LINE, AND SINKER, DIDN'T I?

DOES PRINCESS ARIEL KNOW ABOUT ALL THIS...?

YEP. SHE DOES.

IN FACT, HER HIGHNESS WAS THE ONE WHO CAME UP WITH IT IN THE FIRST PLACE.

I KIND OF FEEL BAD, SINCE WE WERE STILL DECEIVING YOU...

ANYTHING LESS THAN THIS AND I PROBABLY WOULDN'T HAVE FIGURED IT OUT.

REALLY...

I'M JUST HAPPY THAT I GET TO HEAR MY NAME...

"SYLPHIETTE," FROM YOUR LIPS AGAIN.

SWING

GNOMP

EEEK!!

MAYBE I CAN'T CONTROL MY LOWER HALF JUST YET, BUT I'M SURE AS HELL ON THE ROAD TO RECOVERY.

UNGH.

CAN'T DO IT...

GVOOM GVOOM...

YOU JUST SURPRISED ME A LITTLE, THAT'S ALL...

I-IT'S FINE.

OH, SORRY...

DROOP...

HUH ...?

FOR WHAT?

THANKS, SYLPHIE.

OH...

NEVER MIND.

IT'S NOTH-ING.

DRIZZLE

DRIZZLE...

THE RAIN...

LOOKS LIKE IT'S ABOUT TO STOP, HUH?

CRUMBLE

CRUMBLE...

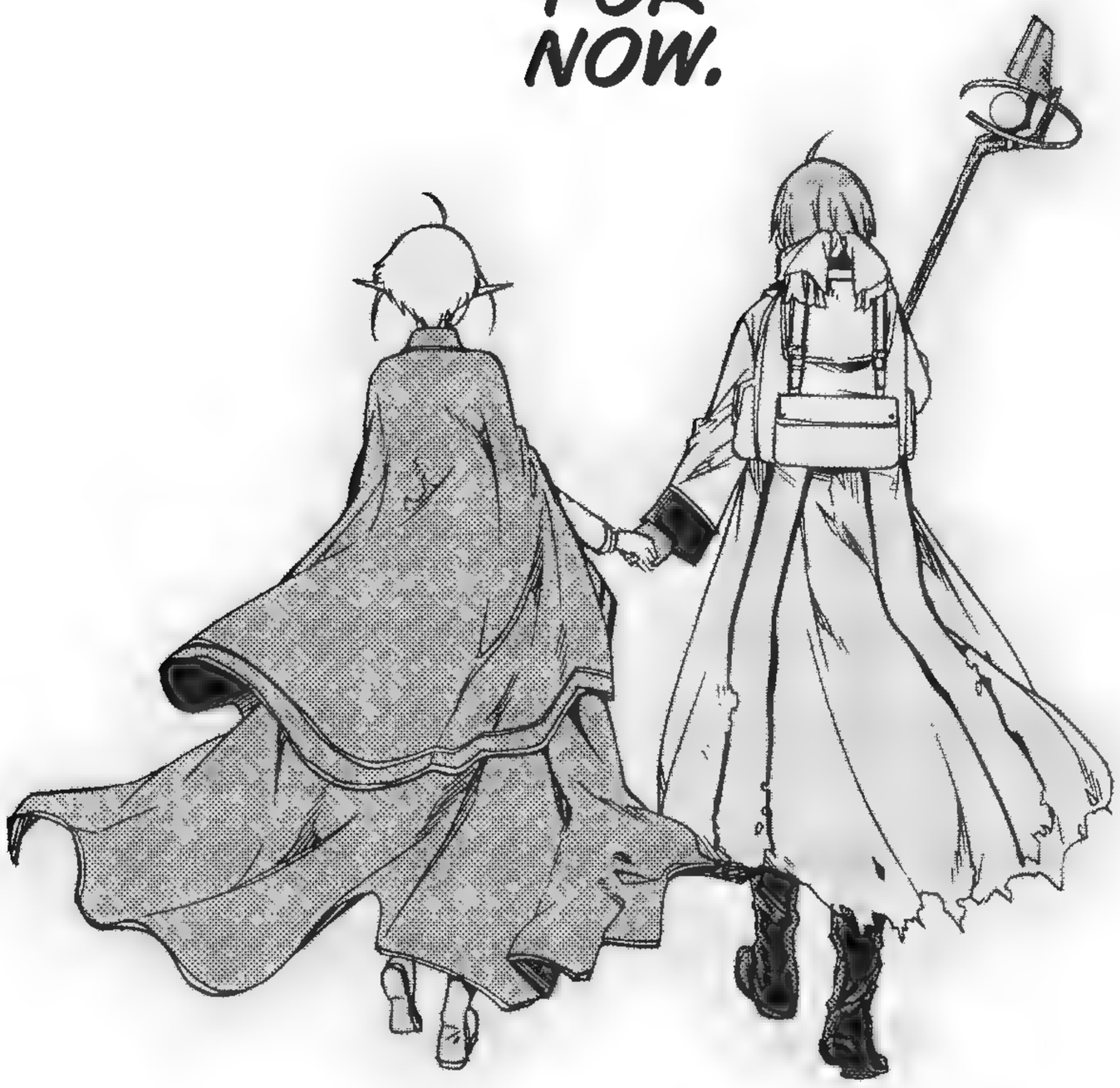
I COULDN'T GO ALL THE WAY...

WE DON'T HAVE TO PICK THAT FLOWER, RIGHT?

YUP.

WANT TO GO HOME?

BUT THIS IS ENOUGH FOR NOW.



THAT'S WHAT I BELIEVE.

I look forward to seeing you again soon.

Well, guess I'm headed back to the dorm.

...

TOK TOK TOK...

THIS MEANS WE'RE OFFICIALLY BOYFRIEND AND GIRLFRIEND, RIGHT?!

WOW! WOW!

CLICK

KNOCK KNOCK

SO WHAT SHOULD I DO...?

FITZ, REPORTING FOR DUTY.

PARDON ME.

YES?

BUT...IT LOOKS LIKE MY BODY'S NOT GOOD ENOUGH FOR RUDY...

STARE...

.....

SIGH...

HUH?!

SIGH... ANOTHER FAILURE, THEN?

UPON FURTHER CONSIDERATION, I BELIEVE IT WAS RATHER A THOUGHTLESS PLAN.

TO COUNT ON HIM STRIPPING YOU OUT OF THE FEAR OF HYPOTHERMIA? PREPOSTEROUS, REALLY...

UHHH.

UMM...

WHA?!

BUT YOU MUSTN'T LET THIS BRING YOU DOWN, UNDER-STOOD?

IT'S QUITE ALL RIGHT. YOU NEEDN'T RECOUNT THE DETAILS.

?!

THE TRUTH IS, YOUR PLAN WAS A COMPLETE SUCCESS, PRINCESS ARIEL!

BLUSH

WE TOLD EACH OTHER HOW WE FELT!

AND THEN ...

OH, YES. THEN, TO REPORT...

PLEASE REMOVE YOUR GLASSES.

I-IS THAT SO? AND YET YOUR EXPRESSION SEEMS ODDLY DISMAL.

.....

...

THE FACE OF A WOMAN WHO SIMPLY CANNOT COMPREHEND THEM GETTING SO FAR, AND NOT GOING ALL THE WAY.

UMM, AND THEN, IT'S ABOUT RUDY, BUT...

.....

???

WHAT DID YOU SAY?!

HE GOT REALLY SAD AND...

SAID THAT HE CAME TO THE UNIVERSITY IN SEARCH OF A CURE FOR HIS PROBLEM.

MUMBLE MUMBLE

...

BUT THIS IS A SCHOOL, NOT A HOSPITAL...

I'VE HEARD RUMORS ABOUT SUCH THINGS...

MUMBLE MUMBLE

OH, PLEASE EXCUSE ME. I FORGET MYSELF...

MRR...

IT SEEMS THAT RUDEUS IS FAR LESS OF A MAN THAN I IMAGINED.

SIMPLY DREADFUL... TO THINK HE WAS OF NO USE WHEN THE MOMENT CAME.

YOUR HIGHNESS, I THINK YOU'VE GONE TOO FAR.

HIS FACE, HIS ATTITUDE! THAT DREADFUL LACK OF CONFIDENCE! NOW IT ALL MAKES PERFECT SENSE!

LUKE?

BWISH

THE POOR FELLOW! HE MUST HAVE BEEN AT THE END OF HIS ROPE WHEN HE ENROLLED HERE.

THERE ARE TIMES WHEN A MAN IS FACED WITH CIRCUM-STANCES HE CANNOT CONTROL.

DO YOU WANT TO CURE THIS ILLNESS OF HIS?

SYLPHIE.

OH, IT'S FINE...

THEN... PLEASE PARDON ME.

I MUST APOLOGIZE TO YOU AS WELL, SYLPHIE.

WHAT?

S-SURE DO.

I WANT TO HELP HIM.

AFTER ALL, RUDY IS MY SAVIOR.

YUP.

EVEN IF IT WILL BE A LITTLE DIFFICULT FOR YOU?

OKAY.

IT SEEMS AS THOUGH LUKE HAS A PLAN, SO LET US WAIT FOR HIM.

BIDI BIDI BIDI

EXCUSE ME, YOUR HIGHNESS.

UNDERSTOOD. PLEASE WAIT A MOMENT.

HOWEVER, REGARDING CURES FOR ERECTILE DYSFUNCTION, I DO HAVE A FEW IDEAS OF MY OWN...

KCHAK

THEN REVEAL THE BAREST HINT OF YOUR SHOULDER. NEXT...

"MY! IT IS SO WARM!"

GOT IT!

OKAY!

AND *THEN*, YOU PLY HIM WITH LIQUOR UNTIL HE'S *GOOD* AND DRUNK, AND SAY...

NEVER FEAR.

SYLPHIE IS EARNESTLY--

WHAT WAS THAT, LUKE?

UHHGH!

IF IT WERE AS EASY AS SEDUCING HIM WITH YOUR BODY, WE WOULDN'T BE IN THIS MESS, WOULD WE?

WHAT IS IT, LUKE?

A DRAUGHT WITH THE MOST POTENTLY AMOROUS EFFECTS.

AN APHRODISIAC.

HAVE HIM DRINK THIS, AND I DARESAY YOU'LL SUCCEED.

YES.

PHIALS LIKE THIS WERE ONCE MADE IN THE FITTOA TERRITO-RY.

AN APHRODI-SIAC?!

NOWADAYS IT'S A RARITY, SO I'D PLANNED TO SELL IT IF I EVER NEEDED FUNDS, BUT...

...

BY THE WAY, THIS SINGLE BOTTLE COST ME FIFTEEN ASURA GOLD COINS.

FIF-TEEN?!

I WILL GIVE IT TO YOU.

SYLPHIE.

THANKS, LUKE.

BUT IT'S SO EXPENSIVE...

LUKE...

IT'S FINE.

YOU TWO ARE SO VERY CLOSE, AREN'T YOU? ♡

LEAN

AFTER ALL, YOU'VE SAVED ME NUMEROUS TIMES.

CLINK

ALLOW ME TO GIVE YOU SOMETHING AS WELL.

SQUEEZE

BUT YOUR HIGHNESS, THIS IS YOUR--

YES, FOR THIS MONTH.

WE'VE COME THIS ALL THIS WAY, AND THIS IS ALL THAT I CAN DO FOR YOU.

BUY THE HIGHEST-QUALITY LIQUOR YOU CAN GET YOUR HANDS ON.

I WOULD EXPECT NOTHING LESS FROM YOU, PRINCESS.

YOUR HIGH-NESS ...!

CLASP!!!

ALL'S FAIR IN LOVE AND WAR. GO CLAIM VICTORY!

SYLPHIE.

RIGHT.

OKAY, I'M OFF!!

KNOCK KNOCK

KCHAK

YES?

GOOD EVE-NING.

I'VE...

GLANCE

SYL--

I MEAN, SIR FITZ.

UH...

I'VE COME TO STAY THE NIGHT!

Mushoku Tensei

jobless reincarnation

Mushoku Tensei

jobless reincarnation

That Which Luke Notos Greyrat Does Not Require

By Rifujin na Magonote

"Mmm…"

When Luke awakened that morning, a sweet scent wafted towards his nose, just like it always did. He extended a hand towards the source of the scent, and without a second thought, he gently caressed it. Though somewhat rough to the touch, a warm and comfortable sensation greeted his palm.

"Morning, kitten. Did you sleep well?"

"Oh, good morning, Sir Luke…did I wake you?"

"A beautiful woman bathed in the morning light is always better than some silly dream."

"Hee hee! What a flatterer."

"I but state the truth. We can hardly call that flattery, now can we?"

Perched on the bed beside Luke was a single woman. Dressed in only her undergarments, she looked down at Luke with an embarrassed expression.

Anyone but a child or a fool could tell what they'd been up to the night before.

Come now, it's not so strange a thing. After all, when Luke was off duty, he always brought home a woman. His friends and associates were all quite familiar with his proclivities.

"Thanks for yesterday. You were quite a help."

"Oh, no need to thank me. It was something *you* asked of me, sir Like, so how could I refuse…?"

It wasn't like he knew this woman well. He just happened upon her as she was tidying up his room. She'd helped him, and so he half-jokingly asked her to dinner as a gesture of gratitude. Things seemed to go well, so he took her home to bed afterwards. From a certain perspective, it was more like they'd both given each other the gift of a night's indulgences.

"Excuse me, sir…and I know this is a touch shameless… but I have a favor to ask of you."

At those words, Luke allowed his gaze to wander a little. Many thought of Luke as an indiscriminate womanizer, but in fact he was quite discerning about which women he brought home with him.

It wasn't the size of their breasts that informed his decisions, either. If sleeping with a woman would likely prove troublesome, then he would refrain from indulging his desires. Nothing more, nothing less.

This woman, however, had managed to circumvent all of his usual precautions.

He wondered, "What would that be? Until your clothes are on and you leave this room, I am still your lover. Which means I'm quite open to granting you favors, of course."

Luke spoke in a sweet whisper, but deep inside, he thought: *This is going to be a pain.*

Luke Notos Greyrat would someday become the next head of the great house of the Notos Greyrats of the Kingdom of Asura. Those women who knew of his rank were often quick to try and use it for their advantage.

It was all well and good if the favor they desired was of a monetary nature. Then all Luke need do was package up an appropriate amount and hand it over with a smile. In the worst case, if it was too large a sum, he would simply suggest a more modest figure.

However, if the woman brought up the possibility of marriage—well, that was simply a non-starter.

The Kingdom of Asura did not teach its children quite so strict a code of ethics as some other countries did. Nonetheless, sometimes people still wound up with no choice but to take proper responsibility for their affairs.

Fortunately for Luke, he had taken care to avoid women who might entrap him like that wherever possible.

But here was *this* woman, taking out a small box. "Umm, I found this while cleaning last night," she said.

Luke had seen the box somewhere before. It was definitely his, so her claim made sense. However, Luke hadn't the slightest idea what was in it.

"And, ah…remind me what it's for?"

"Perfume, sir."

The woman opened the box. Inside was a small, beautiful glass bottle.

"Knowing you, sir Luke, you must have purchased it as a gift for some lady, no? But it was covered in dust… So I was wondering, would you mind if I took it? I admit I'm curious about what sort of perfume is popular with the highborn of Asura."

"…Oh."

At that moment, Luke began to remember a few things about that bottle. For instance: why it was lost in the depths of his belongings, and why he'd let it grow so dusty.

"Ahhh, you must forgive me, but in truth, that is not perfume, and so I cannot give it to you in good conscience."

"It's not? Then what in the world is—"

"Why don't we go on a date instead? Perhaps you'll allow me to select a perfume just for you, one that suits you perfectly."

"Oh *my*!"

"As for the time, would tomorrow afternoon suit?"

"Yes, of course!" She nodded rapidly, blushing.

"Then for now, why don't you get dressed, so the two of us can return to our schedules?"

"Would you mind if I stayed here a little while longer?"

"Well, aren't you the pampered one," Luke drawled, as he leaned down to kiss her. "I don't think I'd mind at all."

But even as he kissed her, he found himself thinking about that bottle, and how he'd come to own it.

★★★



It was back before Her Royal Highness Ariel developed an ambition for the throne. She was attending a party, as was her wont, with Luke and Derrick in tow.

Many nobles attended parties with an agenda in mind, but Ariel had no such ulterior motives.

She was an extraordinarily charismatic woman. Most people grew enthralled merely from hearing her voice. Combine that with her beauty, and it made her the perfect candidate for belle of the ball. And so she received invitations to parties almost every day, from nobles who sought the prestige that comes from the presence of royalty. Some of them most certainly had designs to win Ariel as a bride, and thereby enter the ranks of royalty themselves.

While the balls unfolded, supporters like Derrick would discreetly advocate for Ariel becoming Queen, and search for more allies to back her claim, even if Ariel herself had no such desire.

As for Luke, he preferred women to politics.

He fared well with women, thanks to his handsome face. He was so attractive, in fact, that by the standards of the Kingdom of Asura, his looks would easily fall into the top five percent.

If one were to phrase it in Rudeus's style, one might say Luke's looks were "Tokyo-grade."

As such, noblewomen flocked to him like moths to a flame.

Given the pick of the litter, there was no way that a natural-born womanizer like Luke wouldn't indulge himself to his heart's content.

That said, Luke had been strictly admonished to screen every woman whom he took to his bed, even more carefully than his father had, in his day.

Though his admirers were all women, they were not all innocent young maidens. Different kinds of women also approached him: Matriarchs who had inherited the family estate; mistresses of the house who ruled over their husband and household; and other, similar sorts.

No matter how good-looking Luke might be, no matter how much he knew how to entice a lady, *those* sorts of women were sly old foxes. Laying a hand on them would certainly lead to trouble.

If he didn't want to see the House of Notos fall—which would certainly cause him to lose his rank—then he should never lay a hand on those kinds of women. That is what Philemon taught him.

It was a strict lesson, but one that Luke took to heart. Perhaps the strictness Luke's mother always showed her husband was part of why.

Anyway, Luke avoided dangerous women and womanized with consummate skill. Parties in banquet halls were the perfect hunting ground for a man like him.

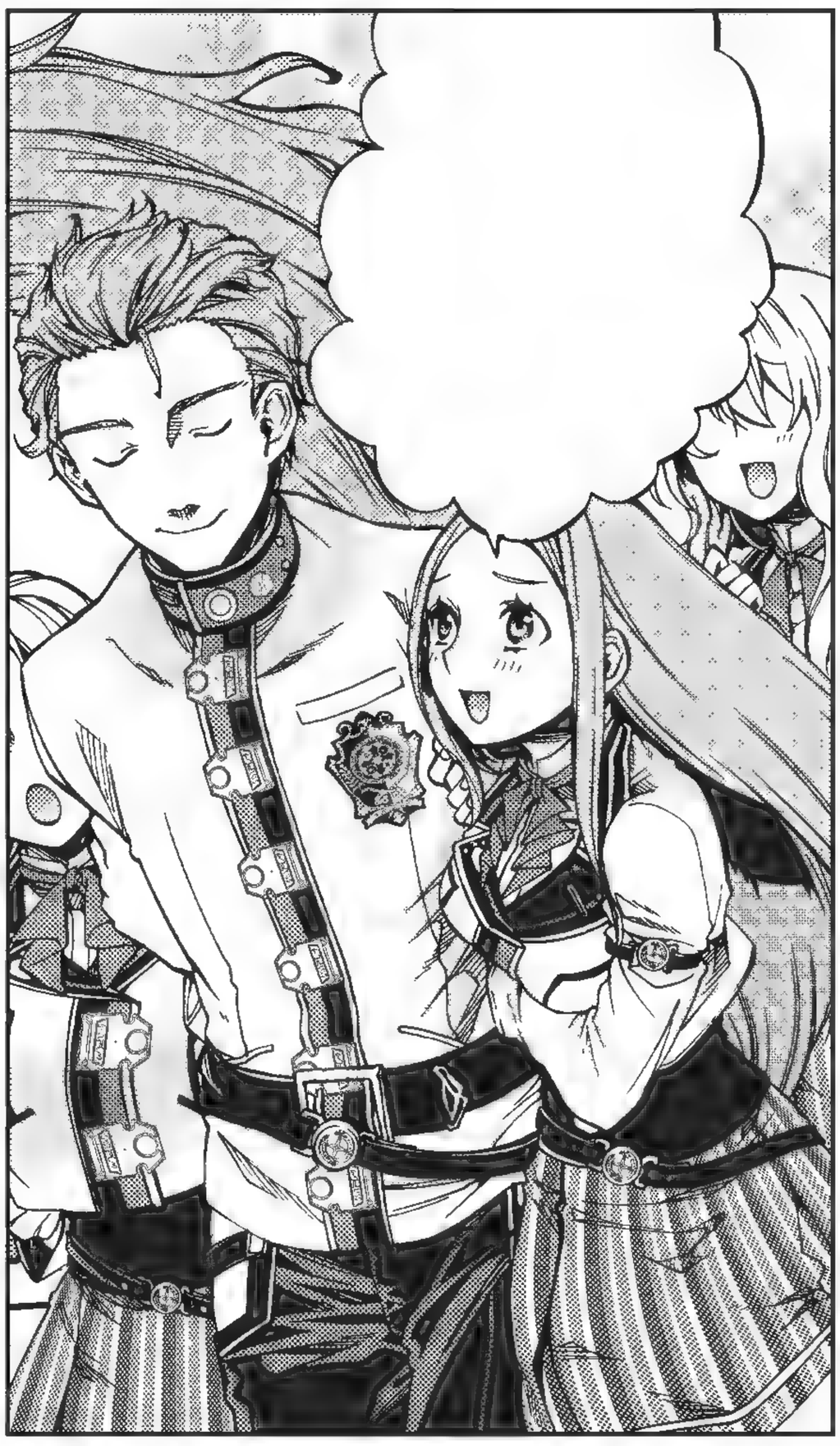
"Pardon me, Sir Luke."

However, it was not a woman who approached him that day.

It was a man, and a young man at that. Women loved Luke, but men were generally inclined to dislike him, so this was quite unusual.

"It is a pleasure to lay eyes upon you," the man went on. "I am Koldo Leach, head of the House of Leach."

"The House of Leach…? My apologies, but I am not familiar."



"I suppose that is somewhat to be expected. We are a house of middling nobles from a rural region of the Fittoa Territory."

Upon hearing "Fittoa Territory," Luke grew slightly more wary. The Fittoa Territory was held by the House of Boreas Greyrat.

The Boreas were also members of the peerage, and they backed the second prince. Despite sharing a surname, their relations with the Notos were not good at all. Luke did not fancy the thought of House Boreas taking an interest in him.

"And? Why would the head of such a distant House go through the trouble of coming to speak with me?"

"The truth of the matter is, it was not so long ago that my father suddenly passed away. I only recently inherited the title. But when I went to pay my respects, the retired head of the Boreas grew rather wroth with me, indeed…"

"That would be Lord Sauros, then. He is quite severe with those who displease him."

"I'd hoped to pay my respects to the current head of the family as well…but it must have reached his ears that I had displeased Lord Sauros, for I was not granted audience."

After that, Koldo lowered his voice.

"If I am to speak frankly, my lord—as things stand, I cannot imagine myself continuing to align with the House of Boreas.

Luke secretly laughed inside. "I see."

In short, this fellow was sounding Luke out because he wanted to switch allegiances…from Boreas to Notos.

He'd gone through the trouble of approaching Luke because it would be easier to convince him than to speak directly to Philemon. *Lord Sauros wouldn't like a man like this at all, would he? But I do believe my lord father would have no complaints.*

Philemon would probably welcome him with open arms.

At the moment, the Second Prince's faction had overtaken Ariel's, which was left massively short of people.

Philemon Notos Greyrat was working to make Ariel queen, but not only was the effort ill-managed, Ariel herself had no interest in the role. As the situation stood, it would be stranger if things *were* going well.

The pieces that needed to fall in place for her to ascend to the throne were completely non-existent.

Philemon really had no choice but to content himself with whatever pieces he could commandeer from the enemy camp.

But Luke did not play his hand too openly. "You speak as though we must accept someone simply because the Boreas disfavor them."

If this sly young man thought Luke and his brethren were pushovers, then he'd underestimated them. Moreover, if Koldo got one over on Luke, he might scheme to switch loyalties yet again, using the Notos as a

springboard to earn the notice of grander houses like the Euros or Zephyros.

Both of those houses were in the first prince's faction.

For some reason, the first prince saw Ariel, who did not aspire to the throne, as a threat. *As long as she does not seek the throne, he probably won't move against her... but even so, it is better to avoid making enemies.*

Koldo pressed on. "The second princess's faction will eventually clash with the Boreas and the second prince's faction, correct? It is just a matter of time, is it not?"

"Assuming that is true, the time has not yet come," said Luke. "Even you should understand that much, no?"

They both understood each other perfectly. In short, the whole conversation was a farce. Luke was merely making explicit what had already been implied: A spoken promise is not enough. Did Koldo not have some sort of gift to show his sincerity?

(And although Koldo had offered no such hint, Luke also thought: *If you have a younger sister, you really ought to introduce me.*)

"Yes. I did think you would say that, and so I brought this. I am sure it will be to your liking, as you are so popular with the ladies, sir," said the young man, as he took a small box from inside his coat.

Upon opening the small box, there appeared a dazzling glass bottle, carefully wrapped in silk.

"And this is?"

"It is an aphrodisiac we manufacture in our fief."



Luke raised a brow. "Do you imply that I have such difficulties with women as to require such a thing?"

This wasn't courtly posturing, but genuine irritation. Luke was popular with women. You could say even say he considered that a cornerstone of his identity.

To present someone like Luke with a gift like this…?
It was tantamount to an insult.

Though deep down he doubted Koldo had intended any disrespect, the gift of an aphrodisiac rubbed Luke the wrong way.

Koldo hustled to try and smooth things over. "N-no. That is out of the question. However, this aphrodisiac is extraordinarily effective. But one sip of it, and a woman could think of nothing save the man in front of her. Why, even a man could not resist you!"

Though he acted calm, Koldo was merely the backcountry lord of an obscure piece of the Fittoa

Territory. He very well might not have had anyone else to turn to once the Boreas had begun scowling at him.

Luke was not moved. "Unfortunately for you, I have no interest in men."

"Nothing I meant to imply, I assure you, sir! I meant only, ah, should something go awry with *that,* this will provide you with the necessary confidence to, uh… No, sir, I certainly did not mean to imply you would have any kind of… Oh! How could I forget its other virtue? Should you plan to indulge with several women, it also has the effect of restoring one's energies. With this, a man might last not just a single night, but three whole days. Our aphrodisiac is stronger than any other produced in the whole of Fittoa. I am sure it will be of use to you."

To put it bluntly, Luke could satisfy women without any outside assistance. For him, going all night wasn't a problem in the least. Three continuous days might be a challenge, but he was always completely recovered after a full day's rest. He had never once failed to rise to the occasion.

With the blood pounding hot in Luke's head, things weren't looking good for Koldo.

The young man spoke about the aphrodisiac as though making a sales pitch, but truth be told, within the Asuran royal palace, there was already a constant demand for it. Even if Luke didn't use it, it was worth a significant amount of money. The real reason Koldo had brought

out the aphrodisiac when he did was probably to entice Luke with evidence of his family's wealth. Essentially, he was suggesting they might use that wealth on the Notos' behalf when the time came.

The young man had never had any intention of insulting Luke. Luke, unfortunately, was not feeling kindly disposed.

"Well, if you *insist,* then I suppose I shall accept it."

"Then, regarding Lord Philemon, can I count on you to…?"

"But of course. I will speak with him, and Her Royal Highness Princess Ariel, as well."

"Thank you!"

Koldo bowed and disappeared.

"…Hah." After looking at the aphrodisiac in his hands, Luke laughed scornfully and tucked it away.

★★★

That aphrodisiac was still in Luke's possession. During their escape from the Kingdom of Asura, he thought it would be useful to have something easily exchangeable for money, and so he brought it with him.

With the annihilation of the Fittoa Territory, the workshops which manufactured such aphrodisiacs were likewise destroyed. Nowadays, those vials which remained might fetch over one hundred Asuran gold coins.

Luckily, they had still not sunk so low that they needed to resort to selling off their personal effects.

As for Koldo, his whereabouts remained unknown. Most likely he was dead.

"Even if *that* should became useless, was it…?"

Luke ruminated over Koldo's words while looking at the aphrodisiac. His thoughts drifted back to his tryst from the other day.

To describe it in one word, it was the *best*.

Luke never wearied of taking a woman to bed. It was the ultimate satisfaction. To hear women praise him and his manly virtues only satisfied him all the more.

For Luke, a man whose swordsmanship and scholarship were both only average, romance was the only thing he could have confidence in.

During those days when his future remained uncertain, far from his homeland, afraid of assassins, if Luke couldn't at least bed the occasional woman, he would have become a broken man.

What if "that" really had became useless? If Luke lost the ability to enjoy his trysts, he had no doubt he'd be a husk of himself.

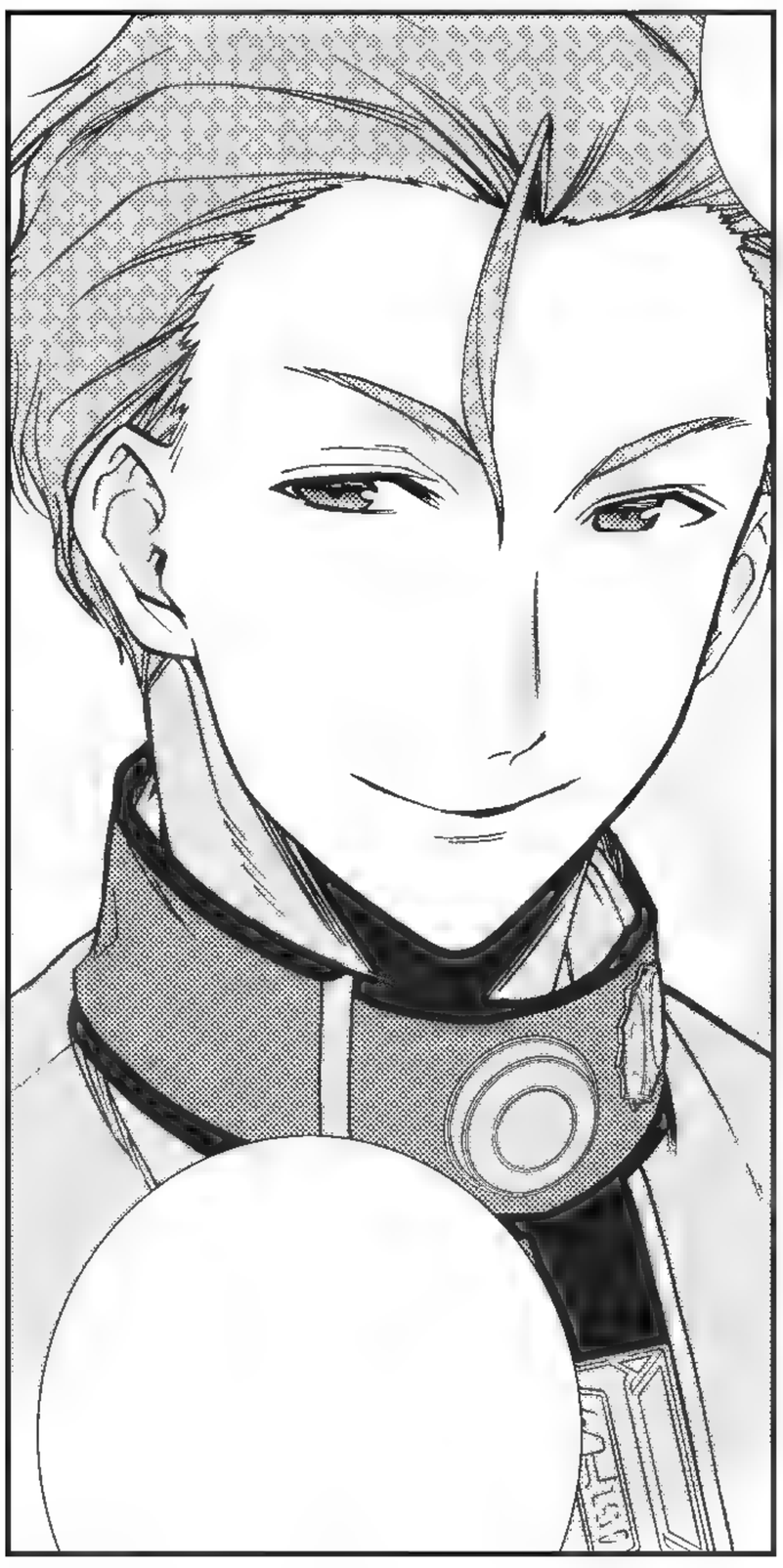
"　　"

……

Just thinking about it made him start to hyperventilate.

One hand over his wildly beating heart, he returned the little bottle to its box.

"If that ever happens…then I guess really will have a use for it, won't I?"



The aphrodisiac's market value would probably only get higher. After all, it was a consumable good, its places of manufacture had all been eradicated, and there still remained many people who wished to use it.

Currently, it was worth one hundred gold Asura coins. In a few more years, it would not be surprising if it was worth a thousand.

Whether I wind up using it or selling it, I'll just hold onto it for now. Luke returned the box to its place at the back of the shelf. Laughing to himself, he thought: *Though I imagine that day is a long ways off.*

Only three days later, the aphrodisiac found an unexpected use curing one Rudeus Greyrat.

Fin

After I completed the manuscript for the short story, I realized that Luke had originally said, "I bought it for fifteen gold coins." Please just interpret that as Luke expressing: "It's a valuable item, and I guarantee its effectiveness."

I'm sorry!!

Rifujin na Magonote

Mushoku Tensei

jobless reincarnation

Mushoku Tensei

jobless reincarnation

HERE I GO.

THEN...

.....

I'D LIKE TO THINK SO, BUT...

DO YOU THINK THINGS WILL GO WELL FOR SYLPHIE...?

IT'S WORRYING, ISN'T IT?

.....

SCATTER
FLAP

OOH! MY HANDS, THEY SIMPLY WON'T STOP SHAKING ...!

PLEASE CALM YOUR-SELF, PRIN-CESS!

SHUFFLE SHUFFLE SHUFFLE...

OHHH NOOO! I'M AT A LOSS, TRULY AT WIT'S END! IT'S AT THESE SUCH TIMES THAT ONE MUST TRY AND DIVINE THE FUTURE...YES, I SHALL CALM MYSELF DOWN WITH FORTUNE-TELLING....

HOW SUBLIME, LUKE!!

I CANNOT POSSIBLY ASPIRE TO MATCH YOUR SKILL, BUT I, TOO, SHALL JOIN IN...!

クネ WRIGGLE

クネ WRIGGLE

I KNOW JUST WHAT TO DO. TIMES LIKE THESE THAT CALL FOR THE HOUSE OF NOTOS'S TRADITIONAL PRAYER DANCE OF DESIRE-FULFILLMENT...!!

クネ WRIGGLE

クネ WRIGGLE

JIGGLE JIGGLE JIGGLE

BECKON BECKON

HOW MOVING...

THEY LOVE YOU SO MUCH, SYLPHIE...

OLÉ! OLÉ!

SEVEN SEAS ENTERTAINMENT PRESENTS

Mushoku Tensei

jobless reincarnation volume 16

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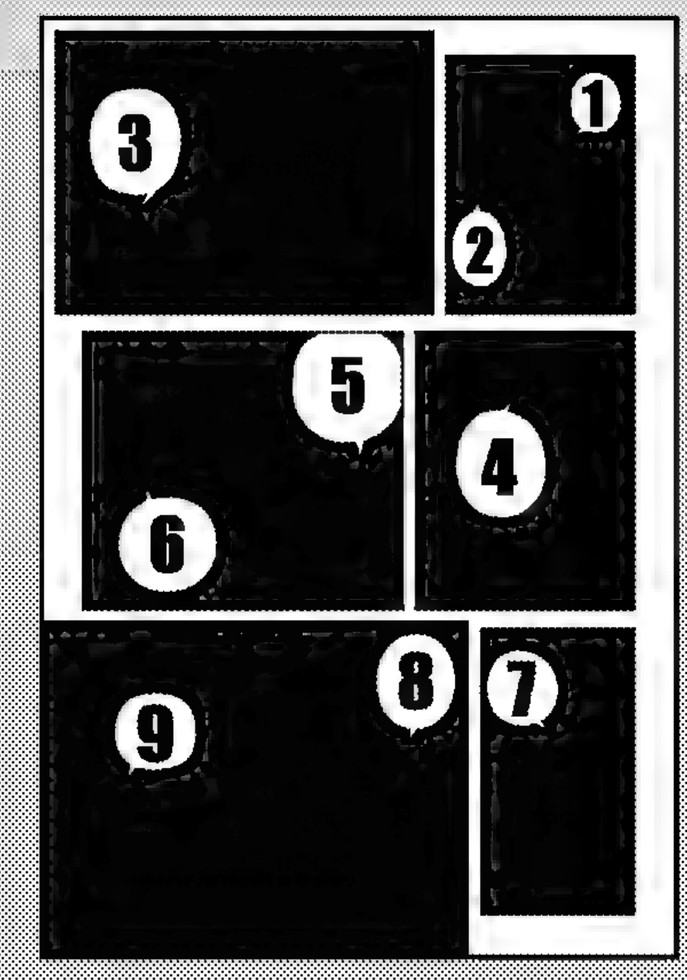
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READING DIRECTIONS

This book reads from ***right to left***, Japanese style. If this is your first time reading manga, you start reading from the top right panel on each page and take it from there. If you get lost, just follow the numbered diagram here. It may seem backwards at first, but you'll get the hang of it! Have fun!!



A RAIN-SOAKED RENDEZVOUS

For years, Sylphie has lived in disguise as a man, serving as a princess's bodyguard under the alias Fitz. Yet from the moment her childhood friend Rudeus joined her at the University of Magic, she's waited for him to see through that charade, and maybe even fall in love with her. Princess Ariel decides that it's time for extreme measures: If Rudeus is too oblivious to uncover the truth on his own, then she'll engineer a scheme that forces Sylphie and Rudeus into an intensely romantic situation!



TEEN (13+)

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THAT WHAT I THINK IT IS?

CLINK

CHAPTER 76

THE FINAL PUSH

I THOUGHT WE COULD HAVE A BIT OF A TOAST.

UH, YUP. IT'S KIND OF...

LIKE A CELE-BRATION OF OUR REUNION, OR SOME-THING.

OH, I SEE.

I GUESS IT'S NICE TO DO STUFF LIKE THAT, HUH?

SNIFF

THIS LIQUOR SEEMS AWFULLY STRONG.

PIP PLUP PLUP

Because tonight, we celebrate!

OH, RIGHT. I SEE.

I DON'T REALLY KNOW MUCH ABOUT ALCOHOL, SO I JUST PICKED AN EXPENSIVE ONE...

YUP.

CLUNK...

I TRIED MAKING SOME SNACKS, TOO...

WHAT'S SHE UP TO?

BUT AFTER THAT INCIDENT IN THE CAVE, SHE ALREADY KNOWS I CAN'T.

OKAY! PERFECT!

SHE SAID SHE WAS STAYING OVER, SO SHE PROBABLY HAS **THAT** IN MIND...

I GUESS OVER-THINKING THIS WON'T HELP, RIGHT?

To the reunion of the pair from Fittoa's very own Buena Village!

Let's make a toast!

Now!

DOES SHE REALLY JUST WANT TO CELE-BRATE ...?

!!

AND ALSO...

TO OUR FUTURE TOGETHER.

UH.

AWW.

...!

CHEERS!!

CH...

GACK!

COUGH!

NGH?!

EEP!

YOU PROBABLY SHOULDN'T DRINK THIS STRAIGHT...

ARE YOU OKAY?

HERE'S A HANDKER-CHIEF.

HACK! HACK!

WH-WHAT IS THIS? IT'S SO DRY!

PLIP PLUP

ARE MEANT TO BE DILUTED WITH HOT OR COLD WATER.

BUH BLUB BLUB...

PLUCK

STRAIGHT?

STRONG SPIRITS LIKE THIS...

SIP

HERE YOU ARE.

OH! IT SMELLS SO GOOD! YUMMY!

OH YEAH, HOT WATER WAS ALSO THE REASON I STARTED LEARNING MAGIC FROM YOU, WASN'T IT?

WAS THAT WHY?

.....

YEAH, SOMETHING LIKE THAT DID HAPPEN, HUH?

AND YOU WASHED THE MUD AWAY WITH HOT WATER...

YOU FORGOT? I WAS ON THE STREET WITH THEM THROWING MUDBALLS AT ME, RIGHT?

REMEMBER THAT ONE HILL WE ALWAYS USED TO PLAY ON?

THE ONE WITH THE TREE?

WE DID MEET UP THERE A LOT, HUH?

RIGHT, RIGHT!

YOU TAUGHT ME MAGIC THERE, TOO!

YOU LEARNED YOUR SPELLS SO FAST. I WAS ALWAYS AMAZED HOW QUICKLY YOU IMPROVED.

REALLY?

OH YEAH, THOSE BULLIES? AFTER YOU LEFT, YOU WOULDN'T BELIEVE WHAT THEY DID...

WHAAT? SERI-OUSLY?

DIDN'T THEY JUST HAVE THE HOTS FOR YOU OR SOMETHING?

NO WAY! NOT A CHANCE!

HA HA.

BUT...

THOSE DAYS AT BLIENA VILLAGE ...

IT WAS NICE BACK THEN, WASN'T IT?

YUP...

IT WAS REALLY FUN AFTER YOU BECAME MY FRIEND, RUDY...

OOPS!

BEFORE I FORGET...

RUMMAGE

HEH HEH, WHO KNOWS ...?

WHAT, ARE YOU DRUNK ALREADY, SYLPHIE?!

Tee hee hee hee hee...

But now we're not just friends...

AND THIS IS...?

HERE...

TAKE THIS...

UMM...

UH...

IT'S...

MEDICINE THAT'S SUPPOSED TO WORK ON YOUR... YOU KNOW.

SO SHE WAS THINKING ABOUT THAT AFTER ALL.

I TRIED A BUNCH OF THAT STUFF ALREADY, BUT ONE MORE CAN'T HURT...

IS IT ALL RIGHT TO TAKE THIS WITH ALCOHOL?

I TAKE IT THIS IS SOME KIND OF APHRO-DISIAC?

THEY SAID IT WAS OKAY TO MIX THEM...

AND ALSO THAT IT WORKS PRETTY FAST.

SO...

IF YOU DON'T MIND, PLEASE TRY IT.

WORKS PRETTY FAST, HUH...?

OH, YUP, BUT...LUKE GAVE IT TO ME.

WASN'T IT EXPENSIVE? IT LOOKS LIKE IT.

I'LL FEEL BAD WHEN IT DOESN'T WORK.

HE SAID IT MIGHT HELP YOU.

WHAT?!

LUKE DID?!

I THOUGHT THAT GUY HATED ME.

THAT IT WAS FOR SYLPHIE'S SAKE.

ACTUALLY, IT'S MORE LIKELY...

YEAH... SYLPHIE...

SHE DID SAY THE CAVE INCIDENT WAS PRINCESS ARIEL'S IDEA, AFTER ALL...

POP

GLUG

HAS SOME REALLY-GOOD FRIENDS, DOESN'T SHE?

BLUUUSH

PWUP

IT'S BITTER...

SWIPE

OKAY!

O...

YOU DON'T HAVE TO DRINK IT, TOO, SYLPHIE...

EEK

WHOA! IT IS BITTER.

ME, TOO ...!

Y-YUP...

BUT...

WE'RE... Y'KNOW... L-LOVERS...

SO...

IT'S NOT JUST YOUR PROBLEM...

BUT SOMETHING FOR BOTH OF US TO TACKLE TOGETHER.

DUB

DUB

DUB

GULP

GULP

SCRATCH

SCRATCH

SNACKS, SNACKS...

HUH...?

WHOA~! I'M GETTING HOT.

SNAP

SNAP

DUB

SOMEHOW...

DUB

MELT...

MY SKIN FEELS HOT...

EVEN AT THE PALACE, I HEARD ABOUT HER, YOU KNOW.

THEY SAY SHE'S REALLY VIOLENT.

STILL, RUDY, YOUR FIRST WAS...ERIS?

AM I RIGHT?

CREAK

IF I EVER SEE HER, I'M DEFINITELY GOING TO GIVE HER A PIECE OF MY MIND!!

AND SHE THINKS YOU'RE NOT GOOD ENOUGH FOR HER?! I CAN'T BELIEVE IT!!

RUDY, YOU KEPT HER SAFE ALL THE WAY FROM THE DEMON CONTINENT TO THE KINGDOM OF ASURA...

POUT

SHE WAS DRINKING REALLY FAST, SO I GUESS SHE'S ALREADY DRUNK.

D-DON'T, SYLPHIE.

SHE MIGHT TURN THE TABLES ON YOU...

ERIS IS AWFULLY STRONG...

MUTTER

S-SORRY.

BUT COME TO THINK...

IT'S ONLY BECAUSE OF YOUR PROBLEM...

THAT WE WERE ABLE TO MEET AGAIN...

MUTTER

Y...

YEAH.

WIND

I... love you, too.

SHE MIGHT DISAPPEAR, TOO.

WIND

WIND

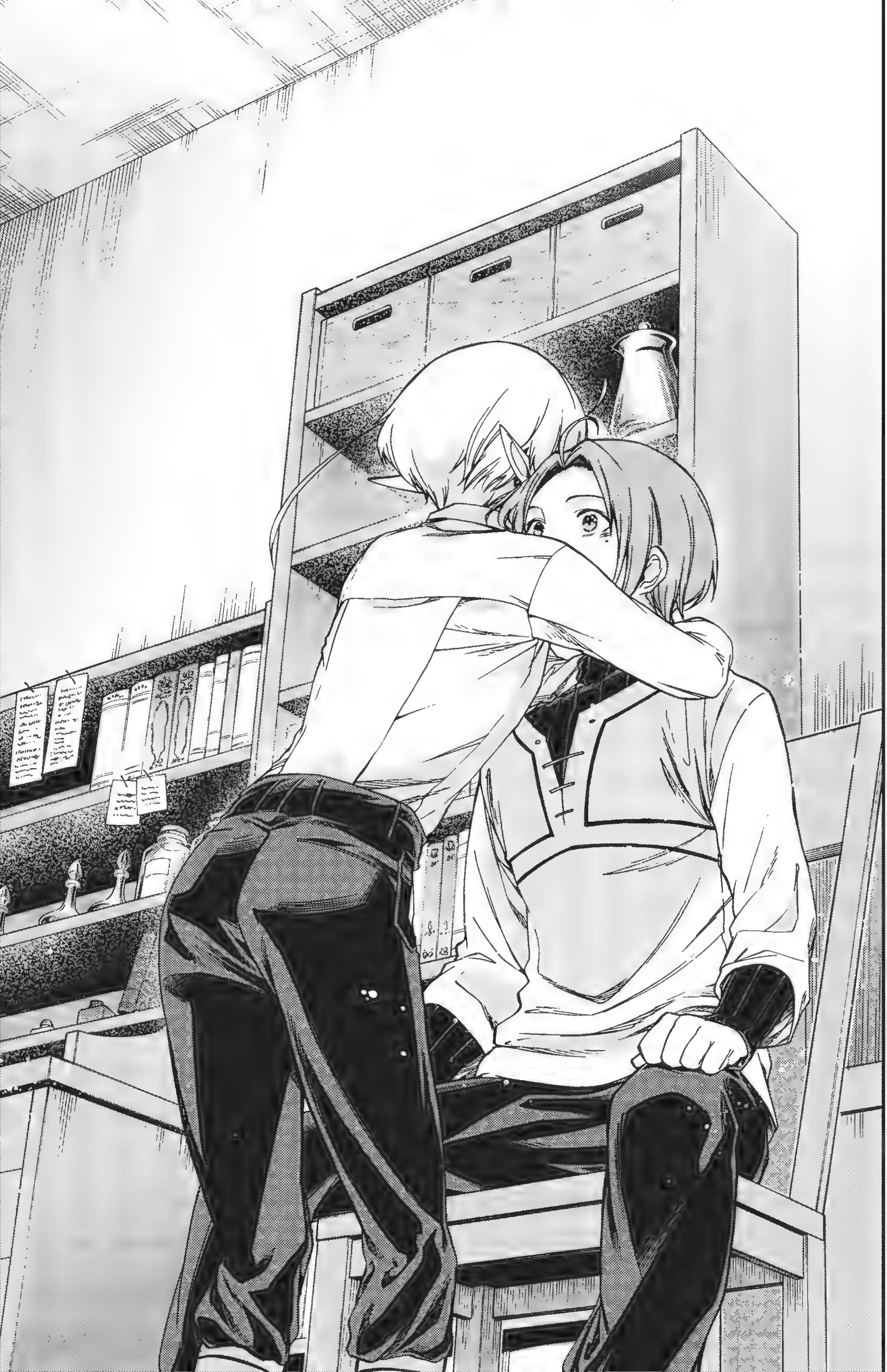
IF I DON'T LET HER KNOW I LOVE HER...

I HAVE TO GET OVER THIS 'ALREADY.

FOR SYLPHIE'S SAKE, TOO.

THIS MAKES IT LOOK LIKE THE FEELINGS I TOLD SYLPHIE WERE A LIE.

AM I STUPID? WHY AM I REMEMBERING THIS NOW?



HEY, RUDY.

IT'S ALL RIGHT.

EVEN IF YOU CARRY THOSE WOUNDS...

PET PET

EVEN THOUGH MY HEALING MAGIC CAN'T HELP AT ALL IN TIMES LIKE THESE...

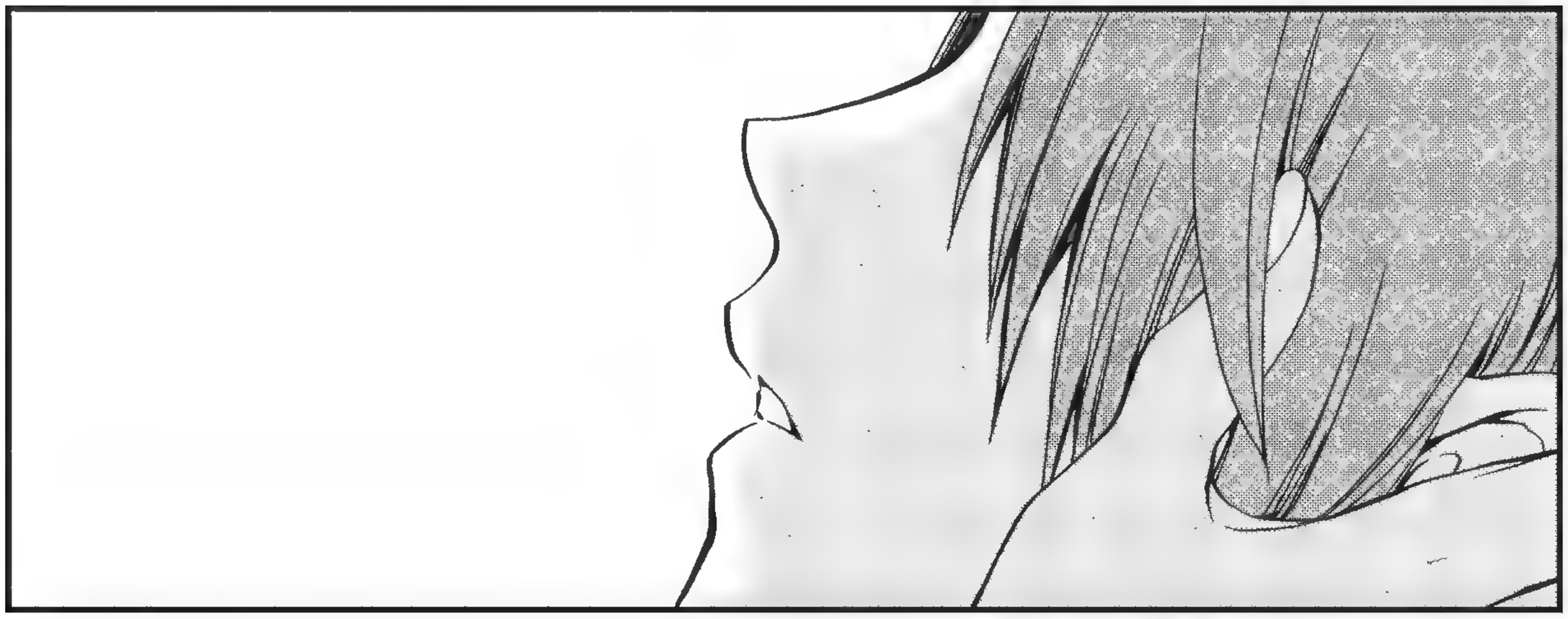
I'LL STAY BY YOUR SIDE.

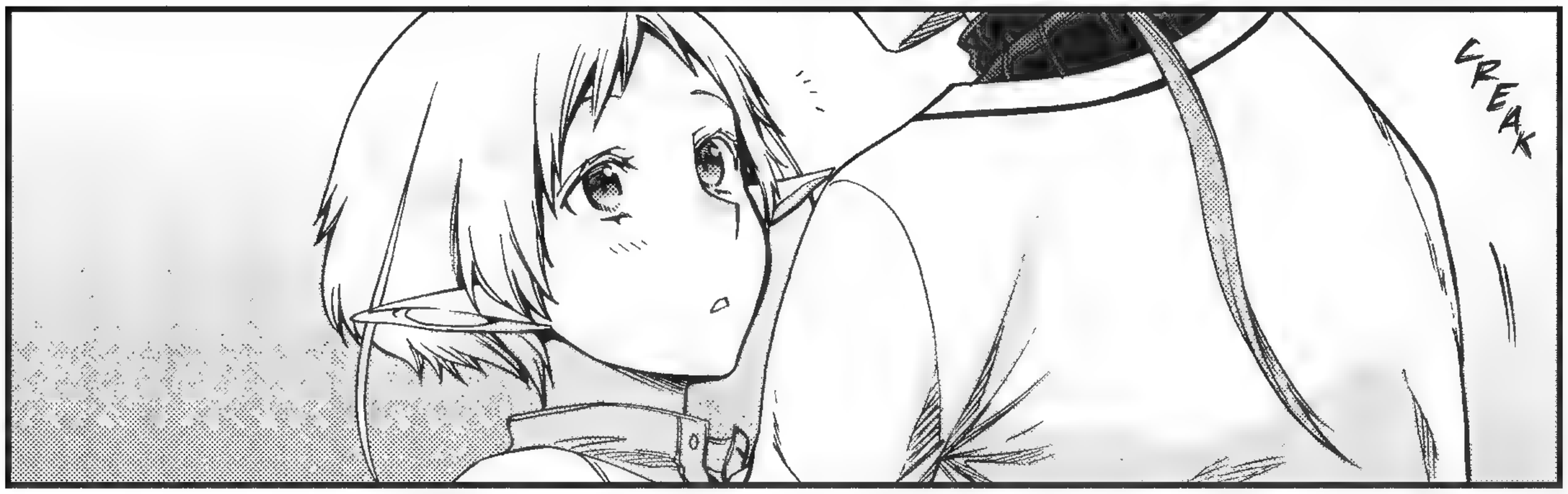
I'LL NEVER LEAVE YOU, SO...

OKAY ...?

RUDY.

LET'S GET THROUGH THIS TOGETHER.




CREAK


!


SQUEEZE

NOD

.....

Y...

YOU CAN'T WAIT?

THEN ...

THEN...

PLEASE...

INDULGE IN ME, TO YOUR HEART'S CONTENT.

WHY AM I LIKE THIS?

UGH... WHY...

AND MAYBE IT'S BECAUSE I RELAXED AND JUST WENT WITH MY DESIRES, AFTER I REALIZED SYLPHIE WASN'T GOING TO DISAPPEAR.

SOME OF IT'S PROBABLY BECAUSE OF THAT APHRODISIAC...

I WAS DEFINITELY WORSE THAN I WAS MY FIRST TIME.

EVEN WORSE THAN THAT TIME...

YEAH.

BACK THEN, WHEN I WOKE UP, ERIS WASN'T NEXT TO ME.

GOOD MORNING...

RUDY.

MY SKINNY BODY WASN'T WEIRD, RIGHT...?

SO...

HOW WAS IT?

!

SFF...

PET... PET

HEE.

RULULUDY, COME ON...

I'M CURED.

RUDY?

BUT...

THAT APHRODISIAC...

DEFINITELY WORKED...

WHAT WORKED THE MOST...

THANKS, SYLPHIE.

WAS SYLPHIE, HERSELF.

The story continues in Volume 17!

Mushoku Tensei

jobless reincarnation